

“On Asp and Cobra You Will Tread...:”

**Animals as Allegories of Transformation in
Delacroix’s *Liberty Leading the People*.**

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1. Eugène Delacroix: *Liberty Leading the People*. Oil on canvas. 260 x 325 cm. 1830. Paris: Musée du Louvre.

Introduction

Liberty Leading the People (ill. 1 and 18) Eugène Delacroix's (1798-1863) most famous painting, commemorates the July Revolution, the final overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy during *les Trois Glorieuses*, Tuesday 27, Wednesday 28, and Thursday 29 July 1830. The work pays homage to the newly fought political liberty; it also expresses the painter's yearning for artistic liberty and his wish to modernise history painting. This allegorical image of Liberty as part goddess, part woman of the people, surrounded by dirty, unkempt barricade fighters, flouts Classicism's demand for beauty and idealisation.

The painting's uncompromising realism, which includes the faithful depiction of the clothes worn by working-class men in 1830, weapons and military uniforms, is responsible for its seemingly unique place within Delacroix's painted oeuvre. Even the two paintings dedicated to the horrors of the contemporary Greek War of Independence, the *Massacres at Chios* of 1824, and *Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi* of 1826, show only timeless Greek and Turkish costumes. Other important paintings from the early years of Delacroix's career depict the torment of lost souls in hell from Dante's *Divina Commedia*, scenes from Classical and Medieval history, Sir Walter Scott's

novels, the works of Shakespeare, Byron and Goethe, religious and oriental subjects, and animals. Delacroix's painting of the Parisian street fights of July 1830 does not seem to reflect his great interest in these subjects, in chivalry and novels of chivalry, gothic horror and historical spectacle, historical and oriental costumes. The realism of *Liberty Leading the People* is equalled only in Delacroix's early political caricatures. Besides ridiculing fashionable clothing in these caricatures (ill. 71), Delacroix depicted animal figures that symbolise the political conservatism of the Bourbons and their courtiers. He also mocked these persons' interest in heraldry and their noble ancestry (ill. 82). Animals and knights, symbols of liberty and heroism for Delacroix, become symbols of conservatism and oppression when he links them with Bourbon rule.¹

The number of publications on *Liberty Leading the People* is considerable and they contain a broad range of interpretations. I noticed that these interpretations stress the painting's realism and relate the work only to the July Revolution itself and to its political background, or to historical events from the period 1789-1830. Furthermore, the many, often hostile, reviews of the painting, which related it to the less savoury aspects of Parisian life of the period, are used as sources for its interpretation, so that remarks about the dirtiness of the barricade fighters, and associations of the figures in the painting with the galleys, the Assize Court and prostitution play an important part in many modern publications on *Liberty Leading the People*.

Attempts to understand the allegorical aspect of the painting usually focus on the meaning of the Goddess of Liberty, rather than on that of the barricade fighters, who are described as anonymous Parisians, social archetypes who

¹ The most important study on Delacroix's caricatures is Nina Maria Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Eugène Delacroix: Prints, Politics and Satire, 1814-1822* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

represent several layers of society, such as a labourer, a *bourgeois*, or a *gamin de Paris* (Parisian street urchin), chosen by Delacroix to accompany this allegory of Liberty. In a fairly recent French monograph on *Liberty Leading the People* this interpretation is defended as the only possible one, while attempts to discern other levels of meaning are judged incompatible with Delacroix's intentions.²

Liberty Leading the People contains many symbols that are still of national relevance in France, such as the Phrygian liberty cap, the tricolour and a female personification of Liberty. Liberty is one of the elements of a famous slogan from the French Revolution that later became the French Republic's motto; its personification has become conflated with *Marianne*, the symbol of the French Republic. *Liberty Leading the People's* national importance may have deterred French art historians from trying to understand the painting on a deeper level than that of identifying these symbols and interpreting the barricade fighters as personifications of the social classes who together form the French nation. Unfortunately, art historians in and outside France tend to disagree on the exact profession and social status of each of the barricade fighters. Neither do they agree on Delacroix's political allegiance or the degree of artistic and political daring that he displayed in *Liberty Leading the People*. Where one art historian stresses the painting's conventional pyramidal composition and believes it to be a Classical allegory with an original modern subject, a return to safer ground after the debacle of the *Death of Sardanapalus* at the *Salon* of 1827, another admires it for Delacroix's flouting of all artistic convention. Delacroix is represented as a partisan of either Bonapartism or republicanism, or as an artist who, for practical reasons, supported the July

² Arlette Sérullaz and Vincent Pomarède, *Eugène Delacroix: "La Liberté guidant le peuple"* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004), 50.

Monarchy, the government that started with the July Revolution. He is variously seen as a defender of civilisation against barbarism, as an artist who sided with the committers of revolutionary violence, as one who sided with its victims, or as a painter who was mainly interested in solving artistic problems.

When I had the opportunity to see *Liberty Leading the People* for the first time in the Louvre, now more than thirty years ago, I stood before it for a long time, slowly realising how different the painting was from the textbook illustrations that I had studied at home. Its sheer size and immediacy dazzled me, but I was also surprised to find details that usually are not mentioned in publications on *Liberty Leading the People*, although they are clearly visible. In this **Introduction** I mention some examples of this to which I will return later. The crouching boy in the far left of the painting grasps a stone in his hand; on this stone and the one next to it the letters VC can be seen. The colour of the Phrygian cap of the Goddess of Liberty is brown instead of the usual red, and it resembles a small animal that holds on to her head with its claws. The half open trouser front of the boy on the right of the Goddess of Liberty has a flap that resembles the tail of a squirrel. One detail truly baffled me; it is the only blue stocking that the half-naked corpse in the left foreground still wears. It reminded me of the epithet *bas bleu* (bluestocking – female intellectual), but I saw no role for bluestockings in this painting. Of the three corpses in the painting's foreground, the one on the left (with the one blue stocking) reminded me of a serpent, the one with the blond hair and moustache of a lion. A serpent and a lion could well have a role in an allegorical painting, but my impressions did not show me the way to a logical explanation of this allegory.

When I started my own research project on *Liberty Leading the People*, long after first coming eye-to-eye with the painting, my aim was to investigate the possibility that it formed Delacroix's reaction to the often negative reviews

that his paintings had received before the July Revolution, his way to prove his originality with a work that would ensure his place as leader of the French School in history painting, a work that would flout artistic rules and make fun of the arguments that his critics had used against him. The context would be the strongly competitive art world, recently described by Sébastien Allard and Marie-Claude Chaudonneret in *Le suicide de Gros*,³ in which artists angling for support from the Bourbon government reformed history painting.

Both the lack of consensus displayed in modern publications on *Liberty Leading the People* and their strong dependence precisely on Salon reviewers' interpretations seriously handicapped my research. After having studied the literature on *Liberty Leading the People*, I had to conclude that it would be impossible to answer the question that occupied my mind without a thorough investigation into the allegorical meaning of all the figures in the painting. I also realised that I would have to use information from reviews and modern publications with caution. I thought it quite possible that hostile critics, who could only see a prostitute and other undesirables, took their revenge on Delacroix's mockery of their own conservative Classical principles by deliberately understanding the painting only at the superficial level of ugliness and commonness. Critics rewording other critics' lines of reasoning could well be responsible for the persistence of the arguments used against *Liberty Leading the People*; the threatening political situation of the spring of 1831, when the Salon was held, for the politicised tone of many, if not all, of the painting's reviews.

³ Sébastien Allard and Marie-Claude Chaudonneret, *Le suicide de Gros* (Montreuil: Gourcuff Gradenigo, 2010).

I decided that the best research method to follow was to start from scratch, to forget most of the existing interpretations of the painting, and to concentrate on everything that surprised me in it, as I had done when I saw the painting for the first time.⁴ My second step was to search for possible explanations and associations in other works of art, literature and history from the period 1789-1830. Once I had started to study *Liberty Leading the People* in this way, I realised that I also needed to investigate possible connexions with popular songs, fairy tales, legends, sayings and nicknames. I discovered that much the same method had been used by Michèle Hannoosh to find a possible explanation for the presence of the lobsters in the enigmatic animal painting *Still Life with Lobsters* (1826-27; ill. 2). She related them to the nickname Omar (*homard*, lobster) of one of Delacroix's acquaintances.⁵



2. Eugène Delacroix: *Still Life with Lobsters*. Oil on canvas. 80,5 x 106,5 cm. 1826-27. Paris: Musée du Louvre.

Apparently, Delacroix had put a visual riddle, which only he and his closest friends fully understood, before the Salon public of 1827. Just like the realism of *Liberty Leading the People*, this visual word game of the *Still Life with Lobsters* had its origin in Delacroix's early caricatures.

⁴ David Bellos has pointed to the necessity, but also to the near-impossibility of ignoring existing interpretations of *Liberty Leading the People* and the painting's acquired iconic status when one tries to imagine the experience of the painting's first public. David Bellos, "In the Mind's Eye: The Meanings of *Liberty Leading the People*," in *The Process of Art: Essays on Nineteenth-Century French Literature, Music, and Painting in Honour of Alain Raitt*, edited by Mike Freeman, Elizabeth Fallaize, Jill Forbes and others (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 11-24.

⁵ Michèle Hannoosh, Bertrand Servois and Lorraine Servois, "Delacroix, 'J.' and *Still Life with Lobsters*," *The Burlington Magazine* 151 (September 2009): 595-606.

Gradually I began to discover that *Liberty Leading the People*, like the *Still Life with Lobsters*, formed a visual riddle, this time meant to invite its viewers to discuss their findings and questions with each other, perhaps even with the stranger standing next to them. The longer one studied and discussed the painting's visual, historical, literary, and other associations, the more the savage reality of the barricade fight would recede into the background. *Liberty Leading the People* drew crowds when it was first exhibited. The intention of this image of rebellion and strife seemed to be to help viewers to bond, sharing the memories and knowledge that made them French and a united people. If Delacroix's barricade fighters challenged their public, it was not with aggression and ugliness but with their mystery.

While I was slowly becoming aware of *Liberty Leading the People*'s associative richness, I also began to realise that this painting's place in Delacroix's oeuvre was not unique. The rag-dressed barricade fighters could be associated with figures from chivalric romance, horror stories, legends and fairy tales, with famous historical personalities, and events and ideas from France's earliest history. All of them could also be linked with animal species with symbolic and heraldic meanings. In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix seemed to have expressed central themes of his early work in a new and wholly original way, as symbols of the transformation of France during the July Days, symbols that his contemporaries would understand on their own or with the assistance of others. These symbols would help them to appreciate the values that they had inherited from their real and spiritual ancestors.

If *Liberty Leading the People* was intended as an image that would invite its viewers to bond, what, then, was the interpretation of the July Revolution that Delacroix wished to bring home to them? For many supporters of the July Revolution, its essence was firstly, that the French people had revenged itself

for France's defeat at Waterloo in 1815, and secondly, that not politicians but the French people had now finally completed the abolition, begun in 1789, of the *ancien régime*, with its distinctive division of society into three estates.⁶ In my view, *Liberty Leading the People* illustrates these two ideas in allegorical form. It is, then, a powerful image of the transformation of the *peuple bestial* (bestial people), the *ancien régime*'s name for the lowest orders of society,⁷ into free human beings, who are reconquering the liberties that they possessed before the subjugation of Gaul by the forebears of the Bourbons. The barricade fighters are depicted as people who have just left their existence as hunted wild animals; they now hunt their former oppressors, the Bourbons and their allies. Once killed, these change into monstrous animals: a serpent, a lion, and a dragon, the monsters that are mentioned in Psalm 91, the psalm from which this book takes its title. As will be further elaborated, Delacroix was likely interested in Psalm 91 because it could stand symbol for the arrogance of the Bourbons and their allies during the Restoration. In this allegory of transformation, the animals who change into barricade fighters are possessed by the spirits of heroes and victims from French history; these return to Paris as a Wild Hunt led by a goddess who looks like the female personifications of Liberty from the French Revolution, but who is essentially a Gallic hunting goddess. She symbolises the liberties, such as that of hunting in their forests, which the Gauls enjoyed. In *Liberty Leading the People* Paris is represented as a place where during the *Trois Glorieuses* past and present, modern city dwellers and forest animals, reality and legend merge, and conservatism and rebellion clash.

⁶ William Fortescue, *France and 1848: The End of Monarchy* (London: Routledge, 2005), 22.

⁷ The expression *peuple bestial* dates from the Middle Ages when Biblical texts, notably Genesis 1 and 9, were used to legitimise the existence of the Three Estates in France. Philippe Buc, *L'ambiguïté du Livre: Prince, pouvoir et peuple dans les commentaires de la Bible au Moyen Age* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1994), 208.

This interpretation of *Liberty Leading the People* is very far removed from the ones that I have summarised earlier, and to many readers it may seem unacceptable. Why should nature and wild animals wish to enter nineteenth-century Paris, and why should barricade fighters form part of a Wild Hunt led by a Gallic hunting goddess? How can one see that all the barricade fighters have just left their former lives as animals, and that the corpses in the foreground are those of monsters? Why would Delacroix have painted an enigmatic allegory instead of a clear one? I hope to convince these readers with a short discussion of some aspects of the cultural and historical knowledge that Delacroix and his public shared.

As I have indicated, when I first studied the painting in the Louvre, I had already associated some of the figures, the gamin de Paris on the right of the Goddess of Liberty, and two of the three corpses in the foreground, with animal species. *Liberty Leading the People's* first viewers must have been even more familiar with the importance of animals in French culture and literature than we are. Many could recite La Fontaine's fables, and knew by heart stories such as that of the Four Sons of Aymon with their enchanted horse Bayard, or Charles Perrault's *Puss in Boots*; they would easily have recognised the presence in the painting of images from these traditional animal stories and their nineteenth-century reinterpretations. They would also have been aware of the use that anti-Bourbon satire had made of these stories and the ghost story of the Wild Hunt.

The Salon public of 1831 had also been amused or piqued by the many caricatures by Grandville and other artists that used animals to comment on the state of the French people before, during, and after the July Revolution. In Delacroix's ostensibly dramatic and serious allegory a comparable form of satire lies hidden, and under this satire his own ghosts, grief, fears and hatreds.

At first sight, the human figures in *Liberty Leading the People* do not resemble the figures in Grandville's animal caricatures. In contrast to Grandville, Delacroix forces viewers to use their imagination and intellect to guess which animal species is depicted and why. The hybrid humans with animal heads in Grandville's caricatures from before the July Revolution are creatures stuck forever in an intermediate state; Delacroix's barricade fighters betray their former animal state in their attitudes, in clothing details and facial features.

Anti-Bourbon satire based on the legend of the Wild Hunt was readily understood by the reading public of the early nineteenth century. It could choose from a considerable number of scholarly and popularised publications that interpreted the legend of the Wild Hunt as a remnant of Gallic religion that had survived in Christian France. Additionally, Delacroix's public knew Gallo-Roman religious sculptures that represented human-animal hybrids, so that these figures' counterparts in contemporary caricatures could be understood as continuations of a Gallic religious and artistic tradition that stood in strong contrast to modern Catholic art and Classical artistic doctrine. Salon viewers would be equally familiar with the historical associations connected with certain wild animal species and with the publications of archaeologists, who had already worked long enough on the earliest history of Paris to know that large stretches of modern Paris had once been woodland area.

Well-educated viewers of 1830 would also have appreciated the way in which *Liberty Leading the People* flouted the principles of allegory, the most noble artistic genre. In 1823 A.-C. Quatremère de Quincy, the secretary (*secrétaire perpétuel*) of the *Académie des beaux-arts*, had published his views on allegory in his anti-Romantic and staunchly royalist *Essai sur la nature, le but et les*

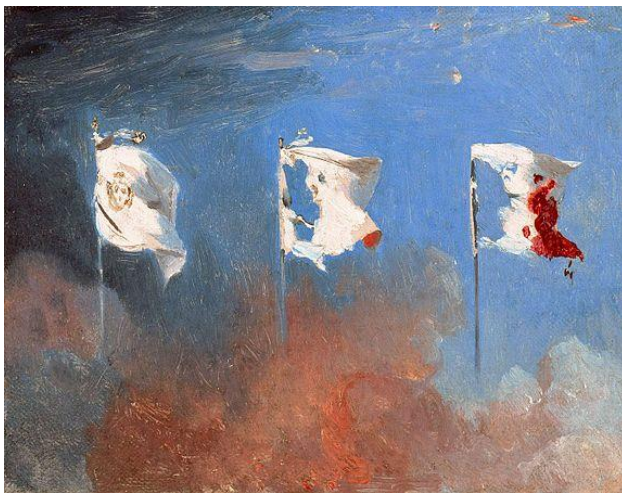
moyens de l'imitation dans les beaux-arts.⁸ He favoured allegories that conveyed the values of paternalistic, if not absolute, kingship; nowhere in his book does he mention the allegorical images of Liberty and the Republic that were popular during the French Revolution. Since the purpose of traditional allegory, clothed in the beautiful, idealised language of Classical Greek statuary, was to express the deeper, universal significance of a historical subject, Quatremère de Quincy denied allegorical value to paintings of subjects from modern history, with figures dressed in modern costume. In *Liberty Leading the People*, the modern French clothing of the barricade fighters and soldiers possesses a deep significance that according to Quatremère de Quincy it could never have. Their shabby clothes liberate people who were treated as no more than animals by their Bourbon oppressors from the anonymity of their animal state, and transform them into heroic freedom fighters, allegories of liberty, chivalry, heroic courage, patriotism, self-sacrifice, and love of art. Classical costume would have reduced them to a new anonymity, that of stock allegorical figures.

Delacroix's choice to rely on enigmatic figures who would challenge viewers to let their imagination roam from the July Revolution to France's Gallic past, instead of on figures with one clear allegorical meaning, was also not allowed by Quatremère de Quincy. The secrétaire defended the simple hieroglyphic language of Greek statuary, where every image expressed one clearly defined meaning, because it did not overtax human perception and understanding. Instead of simplicity, Delacroix gave the French public an enigmatic allegory that expressed the transformation from one situation and the ideas belonging to it to another. Delacroix was not the only artist to create an allegory on the

⁸ (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1823).

process of transformation that took place during the July Days. Léon Cogniet did the same in his sketch *Scene from July 1830* (ill. 3), but he obeyed Quatremère de Quincy's demand that allegories should be simple. Cogniet painted three flags that appear from a cloud of gun smoke, one for every day of the July Revolution; against a bright blue sky the increasingly bullet-ridden and blood-covered white Bourbon flag changes into the tricolour.

In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix rebelled against the Classical principles



3 Léon Cogniet: *Scene from July 1830, or, The Flags*. Oil on canvas. 19 x 24 cm. 1830. Orléans: Musée des Beaux-Arts.

of allegory, defended by Quatremère de Quincy and other conservative theorists, in several other ways; he combined lofty idealism with smut, and relied on verbal and visual association to suggest words, sounds and smells. Most importantly, he interpreted in his own way the provocative idea that was introduced by Nicolas Boileau, a

famous French seventeenth-century literary theorist: no monster exists that cannot be made pleasing through art. Quatremère de Quincy wrestled with precisely this idea in the *Essai sur la nature, le but et les moyens de l'imitation dans les beaux-arts*. The first public of *Liberty Leading the People*, still unencumbered by subsequent interpretations that teach us to admire the work for its glorification of revolutionary violence or sympathy for the victims of barbarism, was probably better able than we are to solve the painting's riddles, and to understand the corpses in the foreground of the painting as monsters beautified by art.

Although there is far more to say about the way in which, in a painting with Liberty as its subject, Delacroix liberates history painting and allegorical language from conservative art theory, in this book I will limit my discussion of this aspect of *Liberty Leading the People* to the way in which it challenges the authority of Quatremère de Quincy. I decided that the explanation of Delacroix's innovative allegory would take so much time that answering my original question -how does *Liberty Leading the People* react to reviews of Delacroix's earlier paintings, and what are these reviews' hidden or outspoken theoretical assumptions- would have to form the subject of a separate research project.

The allegorical language that Delacroix develops in *Liberty Leading the People* takes its images from nature, the animal world, the hunt, French history and legend in the case of the barricade fighters, and, as in Delacroix's early caricatures, from contemporary Parisian life, culture and fashion in the case of their enemies, the monsters that figure in Psalm 91. It is also an allegorical language *sui generis*, which is confined to this one painting. In contrast to traditional allegories, the figures depicted in *Liberty Leading the People*, even the personification of Liberty itself, do not have one specific meaning; instead, they can all be understood on several intellectual and emotional levels well beyond, but not excluding, their interpretation as anonymous specimens of the French people, led to victory by the Goddess of Liberty.

I have just explained some of the knowledge that Delacroix shared with the viewers of *Liberty Leading the People*; I will now call attention to several of the levels on which the painting can be understood, and other conscious and unconscious knowledge, ideas, and prejudices that Delacroix shared with other Frenchmen.

The first level of understanding is that of Delacroix's personal and family history, which was tied up with recent French history; part of it could only be understood by the painter, his relatives and close friends. On this level Delacroix expresses his great admiration for his father and brothers and mourns their fate. Little is known about Delacroix's early years as the small brother of a military hero, Charles-Henry Delacroix (1779-1845), who was aide-de-camp to Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, Napoleon's adopted son, viceroy of Italy during the Napoleonic era. The viceroy's aides-de-camp were experienced soldiers, not favoured for their noble names and elegant manners, but chosen for their proven valour and reliability. Contemporary biographies of Prince Eugène may have inspired Delacroix to regard the prince and his brother, who was so close to the prince, as examples of courage, chivalry and patriotism. The language of these biographies takes its example from that of Napoleonic army bulletins and other instruments of propaganda, which extolled these virtues and contrasted Gallic liberty with Bourbon oppression. Propaganda that promoted authoritarian militarism as a heroic defence of liberty influenced the world view of children who grew up during the Napoleonic era; it still influenced Delacroix in 1830.⁹ Even when he referred to members of his family in *Liberty Leading the People*, he could rely on this shared background, which would enable viewers who were not aware of Delacroix's family history to recognise the barricade figures as allegories of military virtues, and victims of Bourbon oppression.

The second level of understanding of the painting is that of pitiless, rude ridicule of the overthrown Bourbon royal family, the embodiment of the

⁹ For a good introduction to the central role of the army in Napoleonic France and militaristic Napoleonic propaganda see Jean-Paul Bertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire: L'armée au cœur de la France de Napoléon* (Paris: Aubier, 2006).

ancien régime, and their entourage. On this level Delacroix makes use of events from the recent history of the Bourbons that were widely known and that had already formed the subject of caricatures, parodies and vicious attacks. He combines satire of the Bourbons with that of the refined, dandyish but conservative art critics and civil servants who had made his life a misery during the years preceding the July Revolution. Not only Delacroix's obvious lack of respect for accepted artistic doctrine, but also his rude humour at his critics' expense may have incited them to revenge themselves in their reviews of *Liberty Leading the People*. For royalist critics, his attacks on France's former royal family in this painting, and on artists who had won the support of the Bourbons with propaganda paintings, may have formed even more important reasons for revenge.

To my knowledge, the possibility that *Liberty Leading the People* allegorises the downfall of a hated king and his family, as well as contemporary scandals involving that family, has never been considered before in the literature on the painting. The reason for this may be that much of the serious research into the painting's iconography dates from the nineteen-seventies and -eighties, a period during which historians and art historians showed less interest in dynastic and court history than in the lives of ordinary men and women. Feminist and Marxist authors tended to focus on the presence of a strong female symbol of Liberty in *Liberty Leading the People*, or on Delacroix's portrayal of the common people, mistrusted and feared by *le bourgeois*.

In my view, the class conflict that Delacroix represents is that between the descendants of the free Gauls, or every French person of non-noble descent, and the royal and noble families, descendants of France's foreign, Frankish oppressors. Delacroix sided with ordinary working people in one respect only. As a painter he worked with his hands, just like the ordinary craftsmen from

the Eastern part of the city who fought on the barricades. He stood with one foot in the world of the dandyish intellectual and political elite, and with the other in that of the craftsmen of Paris. Being treated as an inferior by arrogant critics and bureaucrats may have strengthened Delacroix's awareness of his ambiguous social position. Satire that lumps his critics together with the Bourbons, their courtiers and their civil servants must be understood against this background.

The third level of understanding of *Liberty Leading the People* is the religious one. As has been remarked, the presence, as a symbol of Liberty, of a Gallic goddess leading a Wild Hunt, would have reminded the Salon public of 1831 of the Gallic, pre-Frankish, era; liberal opponents of the Bourbon government contrasted the supposed religious liberty of this era with the oppressive Catholic state religion that had been reinstated by the Bourbons. Delacroix's Goddess of Liberty ridicules both the Virgin Mary in Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *Vow of Louis XIII*, the most important religious pro-Bourbon painting of the Restoration, and the conservative Catholicism of this period. During the Bourbon Restoration missionaries tried to reconvert a "heathen" France. In *Liberty Leading the People* a heathen goddess, and heathen myths and legends proclaim that missionary zeal had failed to put the French under the yoke of Catholic religion. The sources from which Delacroix likely took his information on Gallic religion and its remnants in Christian France are a, perhaps deliberate, mixture of books by Catholic authors, such as the Benedictine monk Jacques Martin, and writings by leading intellectuals of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era, freemasons practically to a man, whose works were disliked by the Restoration government and the Catholic church.

I will now return to the lion, the serpent and the dragon from Psalm 91, the monsters that are all that is left of the Bourbons once the French people have

defeated them. Towards the end of Napoleon's reign this psalm had inspired the pious Russian tsar's campaign against Napoleon and his generals, whom he regarded as these lions, dragons and serpents. The allied nations that had beaten Napoleon at Waterloo also used this psalm in their commemorations of their victory. In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix turns the allegorical imagery of Psalm 91 against the Bourbons and against their foreign allies, who had kept the Bourbons in the saddle for fifteen years. Although hatred of the Bourbons, their state religion, their allies, and the artists who served them uncritically was the most important reason for Delacroix's interest in Psalm 91, his reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dante's *Divina Commedia* may have opened his eyes to the rich allegorical literary tradition that made use of the imagery of this and other psalms.

Psalm 91 was not Delacroix's only Biblical source of inspiration. The other one, the Book of *Exodus*, had also provided the subject matter of *The Gathering of the Manna*, a famous work by the important seventeenth-century history painter Nicolas Poussin. In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix substitutes the deliverance of the Israelite people with that of the French people. Delacroix admired Poussin; the fact that Quatremère de Quincy used Poussin's works in his defence of Classical artistic principles may have incited him to refer to *The Gathering of the Manna* in *Liberty Leading the People*. Both the modern, irreverent, vulgar allegorical language and the Gallic imagery of *Liberty Leading the People* clash with the religious themes that Delacroix reuses. Images that he associated with intolerance and religious and political conservatism are chased away by images stemming from France's distant Gallic past; these represent the supposed religious and political tolerance and syncretism of this era.

By now one may wonder if Delacroix really supposed every viewer of *Liberty Leading the People* to possess enough knowledge to understand all its layers of meaning on his own. The painting was too intellectual to be understood by the non-intellectuals among its first viewers, and as with the *Still Life with Lobsters*, its most personal aspects would have eluded even better-educated viewers. I suppose that Delacroix intended discussions between viewers of *Liberty Leading the People* to take the form of explanations by more intellectual viewers to less educated ones, whose awareness of their lack of knowledge would lead them to accept their lower social status. Delacroix created one last level of interpretation intended for children and uneducated people, that of guessing sayings, epithets and songs. He also relied on the French people's shared knowledge of the date and day of the week of important events and battles of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era, dates that schoolchildren such as little Eugène Delacroix had learned by heart during this era, and that they had had to forget once the Bourbons had returned to power.

Delacroix's own chosen level seems to have been that of the puppeteer who holds all the strings, deftly and surprisingly defying or manipulating artistic conventions, or that of the master freemason (craftsman and intellectual) who is fully initiated in the mysteries of his own work. He proves his originality, intellectual superiority, vast knowledge, and elusiveness to "fellow" artists, critics and public alike. The answer to the question with which I started my research project on *Liberty Leading the People* emerged partly during my research into the painting's iconography. With it came an insight into the fierce vindictiveness and family loyalty, envy, arrogance, aggressive ambition, and political naivety which drove Delacroix to create a painting that would soon become an embarrassment to the new government, while the artist had intended it as a tribute to both the July Revolution and the July Monarchy.

Readers who are familiar with the most important literature on *Liberty Leading the People* may ask why I haven't mentioned some sources of inspiration for this painting that are often put forward, such as Auguste Barbier's poem *La Curée*, Antoine-Jean Gros's painting *Napoleon on the Battlefield at Eylau*, Théodore Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*, or Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps' print *L'Allocution*. I will mention all of these in due course and point to aspects of these works not mentioned in the literature on *Liberty Leading the People*, that nevertheless must have fascinated Delacroix.

I will end this **Introduction** with a word of warning: it is impossible to fully recreate the experience of the public that stood before *Liberty Leading the People* in 1831. Photographs do not do the painting justice. Associations with songs, historical personalities and legends that would come easily to the French public of 1831, may well elude modern viewers. Our lack of knowledge sets limits to our enjoyment and understanding of *Liberty Leading the People*. My discussion of the painting is inevitably slowed down by the need to explain at length what was familiar to even the readers of popular books and journals in an era with such a great hunger for historical knowledge as the Bourbon Restoration. For reasons of space I had to leave many aspects of *Liberty Leading the People* almost completely undiscussed, the most important aspect being Delacroix's return in this painting to his earlier works, and to his letters and diary. A few important instances of this strategy, which forces us to understand *Liberty Leading the People* as the culmination of Delacroix's life and career until 1830, will have to suffice. The complex, intimate, associative process that fuses all of Delacroix's literary and artistic production deserves far more attention than I can give it here.

The Literature on *Liberty Leading the People*

I will now discuss the publications on *Liberty Leading the People* that I consider the most important for my own research, because they encouraged me to form my own thoughts on the meaning of Delacroix's allegory.

In France, H el ene Toussaint¹⁰ has done the important work of identifying many of the weapons, uniforms, and clothing details that are depicted in *Liberty Leading the People*. Toussaint also published the few existing preliminary studies for *Liberty Leading the People* and X-ray photographs of the completed painting. The combination of three important types of information make her book indispensable reading for anyone who tries to come to grips with Delacroix's complex painting.

I do not agree with some of Toussaint's identifications, especially that of the beret worn by the gamin de Paris to the right of Liberty as a *faluche*, a student beret. In my own description and interpretation of this figure I will explain why. Unfortunately Toussaint gives no sources for her interpretation of the grown men among the barricade fighters as working men who represent the three most important types of manual workers in Paris, the factory worker, the artisan, foreman, or chief of a workshop, and the construction worker from the provinces who was hired for the duration of a building project.¹¹ The sketches that she reproduces, from an early composition sketch for a projected allegorical painting on the Greek War of Independence, which was finally used in *Liberty Leading the People*, to the studies for the figures in the painting, give disappointingly little information on the process of the painting's creation.

¹⁰ H el ene Toussaint, Lola Faillant-Dumas and Jean-Paul Rioux, "*La Libert e guidant le peuple*" de Delacroix (Paris:  ditions de la R union des mus es nationaux, 1982).

¹¹ Toussaint, "*La Libert e guidant le peuple*" de Delacroix, 44.

This may indicate that most of this process took the form of the complex, intimate, associative intellectual activity that I have identified as an under researched aspect of Delacroix's creativity.

I greatly admire Michael Rohlmann's article¹² on the works of art that inspired *Liberty Leading the People*. Building on the work of other scholars, he explains Delacroix's indebtedness to the compositions and other features of contemporary and Napoleonic works of art, notably Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*, and this artist's depictions of wounded veterans of the Napoleonic wars, Gros's *Battlefield at Eylau*, and Delacroix's own paintings from the Restoration period. Rohlmann concludes that Delacroix transformed images testifying to the despair of pre-1830 France into an image of hope for a better future that the reign of the new Citizen King Louis-Philippe would bring. In my own analysis of the influence of *The Battlefield at Eylau* and Géricault's depictions of war invalids on *Liberty Leading the People*, I will consider the personal significance of these works of art for an artist whose brother was a war invalid who had fought heroically at Eylau.

Jörg Traeger¹³ has traced the traditional iconographical sources of the figure of Liberty and has thoroughly analysed the composition of *Liberty Leading the People*. Traeger interprets The Goddess of Liberty as a living flame of liberty, a fiery, radiant epiphany, which has suddenly sprung from the burning of the July sun on the wood of the barricades. Except for the dying boy who kneels at her feet and looks up at her, the barricade fighters are still unaware of her presence. For this reason, not the Goddess of Liberty but the pistol-swaying

¹² Michael Rohlmann, "Delacroix' *Liberté*: Die Erlösung der Bilder," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 70 (2009): 223-44.

¹³ Jörg Traeger, "L'épiphanie de la Liberté: La Révolution vue par Eugène Delacroix," *Revue de l'Art* 98, no. 1 (1992): 9-28.

gamin de Paris, placed to the right and slightly in front of her, is the figure who attempts to lead the barricade fighters forward. Traeger's interpretation of the barricade fighters as men who are fighting for survival without seeing the outcome of their fight matches with my own idea that the barricade fighters are only just completing their transformation from animals into human beings and are fighting too hard for survival to be fully aware of this outcome. In my description of the Goddess of Liberty I will interpret her as a goddess with many identities, some of them animal; I think it quite possible that one of her identities is that of a living shape-shifting flame of liberty.

Traeger was influenced by George Heard Hamilton's early study of the iconography of *Liberty Leading the People* and its sources.¹⁴ According to Hamilton the painting commemorates the fate of a boy who was shot while storming forward over a Parisian bridge, waving a tricolour and shouting "My name is Arcole;" both the boy's act and the painting pay homage to the young Napoleon's intrepid storming of the bridge of Arcole in 1796. Although I fully agree with both Hamilton and Traeger that *Liberty Leading the People* betrays Delacroix's Bonapartist sympathies, I think it is more correct to say that the painting honours not just Napoleon but the French soldiers of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic armies in general. Hamilton further assumes that Delacroix also honours a young girl who fought on the barricades, a heroine whom Delacroix associated with "the maid of Saragossa" from Byron's poem *Childe Harold*.

Without wishing to exclude the Arcole incident and female heroines as possible sources of inspiration for *Liberty Leading the People*, I will relate the painting

¹⁴ George Heard Hamilton, "The Iconographical Origins of Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*," in *Studies in Art and Literature for Belle da Costa Greene*, edited by Dorothy Miner (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1954), 55-66.

to another, comparable, incident that took place during the July Days. The many realistic popular prints of the July Revolution that Hamilton identified as possible examples for details of the painting may indeed have informed Delacroix's rendition of the reality of the barricade fight, just as have figures in popular prints and works of high art that have been identified by other authors as examples for *Liberty Leading the People*. Several types of barricade fighters that return in almost every depiction of the July Revolution can be seen in Delacroix's painting too, *polytechniciens* (students of the Ecole polytechnique), young boys bearing arms, labourers with caps and aprons, and shabbily or neatly dressed men wearing top hats.¹⁵

In my opinion Nicos Hadjinicolaou's publications on *Liberty Leading the People*¹⁶ retain their value for pointing our attention to the many elements in the painting that angered contemporary critics, notably the dirty, rag-dressed barricade fighters, and Liberty's brown skin and the hair under her armpits, and for listing the contemporary reviews of *Liberty Leading the People*. Unfortunately, Hadjinicolaou focused too much on the meaning of the black top hat that is worn by one of the barricade fighters. This distracts from a very significant aspect of *Liberty Leading the People* that is easily overlooked: the living are all wearing hats, caps, or bandanas, and the dead are all bareheaded.

Hadjinicolaou identified an important visual source for *Liberty Leading the People*, Charlet's lithograph *L'Allocution: 28 Juillet 1830* (The Speech: 28 July 1830, ill. 4).

¹⁵ Nathalie Jakobowicz, *1830, Le Peuple de Paris: Révolution et représentations sociales* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), gives a thorough analysis of the ways in which the "people of Paris" were immortalised in (popular) art and literature during the early days of the July Monarchy, and of the "types" of barricade fighters that most of these works depict or describe.

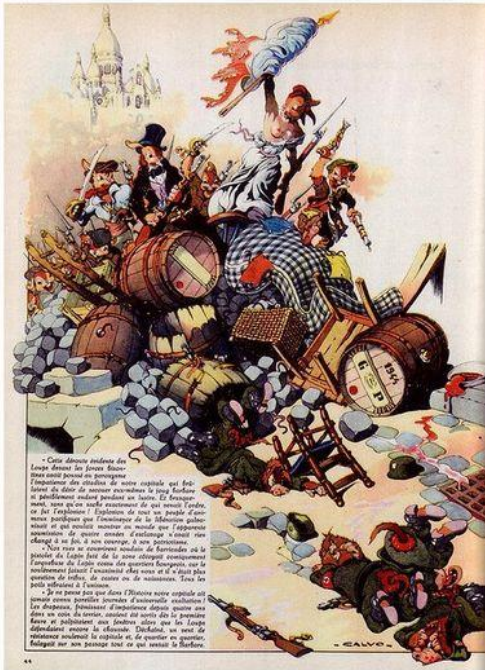
¹⁶ Nicos Hadjinicolaou, "La Liberté guidant le peuple de Delacroix devant son premier public," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* no. 28 (January 1979): 3-26 and "Die Freiheit führt das Volk" von Eugène Delacroix: *Sinn und Gegensinn* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1991).



4 Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet: L'Allocution : 28 Juillet 1830. Lithograph. 25,6 x 32,9 cm. 1830. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Although it lacks the painting's allegorical character, Charlet's work contains many elements that return in *Liberty Leading the People*. In the foreground we see a barricade and a small group of boys and men, one of them carrying a tricolour, whose clothes resemble those worn by the barricade fighters in the painting. One of them is speaking while the others listen spellbound. Nearby a bearskin cap lies abandoned in the street. In the background we see the corpse of a soldier, a group of soldiers on horseback, and other barricade fighters, against the backdrop of a church tower and tall houses that seem to appear out of a cloud of gun smoke. In my view Delacroix's interest in this print was partly raised by its obvious shortcoming. Charlet was unable to express the incendiary character of the speech in an image; it can only be fully understood when one reads the text below the image. In contrast, *Liberty Leading the People* contains several clues that allow its viewers to understand what the barricade fighters are shouting or hearing without having to consult a text.

Another interesting popular print, a caricature by Grandville of the job hunt that started immediately after the July Revolution, *Révolution de 1830: Le peuple a vaincu, ces messieurs partagent* (Revolution of 1830: The People Have Triumphed, These Gentlemen Are Taking Their Share, ill. 16), was reproduced by Hadjinicolaou, but he does not seem to have been fully aware of its relevance for our understanding of *Liberty Leading the People*.



5 Illustration from Edmond-François Calvo, Victor Dancette and Jacques Zimmermann: *La bête est morte! La guerre mondiale chez les animaux*. 1944.

He also mentions a cartoon that is based on *Liberty Leading the People*, from a French comic strip published in 1944, *La bête est morte! La guerre mondiale chez les animaux*, (The Beast is Dead! The World War in the Animal Kingdom, ill. 5), without appreciating its authors' intuitive understanding of Delacroix's intention. In this cartoon the Parisians and the Goddess of Liberty are depicted as rabbits who are rebelling against the big and dangerous German animals who have enslaved them for four years.

Hadjinicolaou notes that Auguste Barbier's allegorical poem *La Curée* was already identified by critics writing in 1831 as the most important contemporary literary source for *Liberty Leading the People*. The likeness between Barbier's allegory of Liberty and the strong, earthy creature depicted by Delacroix is indeed striking, but other aspects of the poem which Hadjinicolaou does not mention, may also have inspired Delacroix. For now, I will only point to Barbier's portrayal of the barricade fighters as savage hunters who are killing the boar of the Bourbon monarchy; in this way Barbier

transformed them into vulgar modern versions of the heroes of Classical Greek myth who hunted and killed the monstrous Calydonian boar that ravaged the Greek countryside.

Marina Warner's interpretation of the female allegory of Liberty as a mythical huntress, an Atalanta, Amazon, or Artemis, a creature who belongs to the wild, "where she has dominion over animals who are her companions and her quarry," connects *Liberty Leading the People* and the contemporary political struggle that it depicts with a goddess from earliest history, with nature, animals, and hunting.¹⁷ Together with Traeger, who interprets Liberty as an epiphany, Warner encouraged me to understand Delacroix's painting as a work in which the ancient Gauls and their gods suddenly reappear to liberate France from political and religious oppression.

In a book that was published after the conclusion -in 2017- of my own research on *Liberty Leading the People*, Marilyn R. Brown focuses not on the Goddess of Liberty but on the two gamins de Paris in the extreme left and extreme right of the painting.¹⁸ The book is valuable for the information that it gives on the importance of the gamin de Paris in nineteenth-century literature and visual art, and on the evolution of this type from the two martyred army volunteers of the French Revolution, the boys Joseph Bara and Joseph Agricol Viala. Brown's interpretation of the two gamins as Children of the Nation, volunteers who either die for their country or rise to fame defending it, coincides with my own; so does her interpretation of them as agents of transformation and political liberty. Like Toussaint, she identifies the beret worn by the gamin de

¹⁷ Marina Warner, *Monuments & Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985; London: Pan Books, 1987), 279.

¹⁸ Marilyn R. Brown, *The Gamin de Paris in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture: Delacroix, Hugo and the French Social Imaginary* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

Paris on the right of the Goddess of Liberty as a student beret. This incorrect identification enables her to interpret the transformation that this boy brings and undergoes as that of upward social mobility through education, a transformation that conforms to bourgeois ideals. It is my opinion that if Delacroix shared this ideal, he expressed his ideas on education in *Liberty Leading the People* by forcing some of its viewers to face their lack of it.

Readers who are familiar with the writings of Hadjinicolaou and Warner will have noted that I have not discussed these as products of the Marxist (Hadjinicolaou) and feminist (Warner) methods in art history. In the **Introduction** I have already indicated that Marxist and feminist art historians of the late twentieth century paid little attention to many aspects of early nineteenth-century French politics, life and culture that may have been important to Delacroix and overrated the importance of others. Hadjinicolaou, for instance, misinterpreted *Liberty Leading the People* as a work created in support of the most radical and poor barricade fighters, and left Delacroix's writings, which testify to the painter's fear of political radicalism, out of his discussion of the painting. For this reason, I have discussed Warner and Hadjinicolaou's publications in the same way as I did all the others that I mentioned in this chapter, as writings that contain important points of view without offering a satisfactory interpretation of *Liberty Leading the People*.

Restoration and July Revolution

Before I present my description and analysis of *Liberty Leading the People* and its sources, two preliminary steps have yet to be taken. I will first provide a short sketch of the political circumstances that led up to the July Revolution and of the Revolution itself. This will be followed by a chapter on the history of origin of *Liberty Leading the People* during the year 1830, its reception in 1831, when it was first exhibited at the Salon, and its vicissitudes during the following years.

In both chapters I will focus on facets of France's recent history that preoccupied supporters of the liberal opposition such as Delacroix, preoccupations that likely found their expression in *Liberty Leading the People*. The opposition was led by liberals, but it included Bonapartists and moderate republicans.¹⁹ I will give special attention to religious strife, dynastic troubles, and political martyrdom; until now art historians have underestimated the importance of these aspects of early nineteenth-century French history for our understanding of *Liberty Leading the People*.

During the Restoration France was a humiliated country. For several years after Napoleon's downfall it had to pay war reparations; it also suffered a temporary occupation by foreign troops, for whose rations and accommodations it was made financially responsible.²⁰ In this way the French were constantly reminded of the fact that the Bourbons were reinstalled on the French throne by foreign powers and foreign armies. During the first years of the Restoration, the military presence in the streets of Paris, consisting of

¹⁹ Fortescue, *France and 1848*, 12.

²⁰ Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon* (London: Tauris, 2014), 178-80.

French and Swiss *gardes royales*, soldiers belonging to line regiments, members of the voluntary *Garde nationale*, and gendarmes on horseback, was so impressive that the city seemed to have changed into a military camp where everything and everyone was constantly under guard.²¹ In 1815 the British government and the Duke of Wellington, supreme commander of the British occupation army, had ordered that, as retribution and humiliation, the art treasures robbed by Napoleon from countries occupied by France would be returned to their rightful owners.²² This would “weaken the military spirit of the nation” and prevent that Paris would become “in future the centre of the arts.”²³ The French Revolution and Napoleon were demonised by the Bourbons and their foreign allies; in the aftermath of the Battle of Waterloo tsar Alexander I, together with the Austrian emperor and the king of Prussia, took the initiative for the Holy Alliance, a European federation which, led by patriarchal rulers who embraced Christian principles, would protect Europe from revolution and war.²⁴

After Waterloo the Bourbons purged the French army and navy from officers suspected of Bonapartist sympathies, and replaced them with noble former *émigrés*. Many of these proved to be incompetent officers whose military experience was small or extremely rusty. One of the most tragic and scandalous results of this Bourbon policy was the shipwreck of *La Méduse* in 1816; *La Méduse* was a frigate that had set out to Senegal under the command of a captain who had not been at sea for more than twenty-five years, and who

²¹ Philip Mansel, *Paris Between Empires: Monarchy and Revolution, 1814-1852* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), 101-02.

²² Michael Marrinan, *Romantic Paris: Histories of a Cultural Landscape, 1800-1850* (Stanford Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 74.

²³ Letter from Lord Liverpool to Lord Castlereagh, 15 July 1815, cited in Mansel, *Paris between Empires*, 93.

²⁴ Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy*, 173-78.

abandoned the makeshift raft on which many of the shipwreck's survivors clung to life.²⁵

The Bourbons reinstated the Catholic church as the state religion; the religious festivities and processions that before the French Revolution had played such an important part in the lives of the French and their kings, the ceremony of the Last Supper, the procession of Corpus Christi and its Octave, the procession of the Vow of Louis XIII, and the mass in honour of the Holy Spirit became important public holidays again. To these were added days of national mourning for the executions of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, for the deaths of other members of the royal family, and celebrations for the name day (or saint day) of the reigning monarch. Opponents of the Bourbon government reacted with festivities on important dates from the French Revolution and the Empire, such as *Quatorze Juillet* and Napoleon's birthday.²⁶

Spectacles that particularly infuriated opponents of the Bourbons were the government-ordered public burnings, in town squares all over France, of symbols of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, such as busts of Napoleon, tricolour flags and cockades, which were organised during the first year after the Battle of Waterloo. These ceremonial burnings were often accompanied by masses and processions.²⁷ Even more provoking were the activities of the *Society of Priests of the Missions of France*, which aimed to reconvert the French people. The terrifying fire and brimstone sermons with which these missionaries tried to convince the French that they needed to expiate for shedding the blood of their king and queen, and had to return to

²⁵ Marrinan, *Romantic Paris*, 37-38.

²⁶ Sheryl Kroen, *Politics and Theater: The Crisis of Legitimacy in Restoration France, 1815-1830* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 117, 164.

²⁷ Kroen, *Politics and Theater*, 43-50.

the Catholic Church with its sacraments of baptism and marriage, worried even the Bourbon government.²⁸ The Missions also organised public book burnings of the popular editions of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot and other eighteenth-century philosophers that proliferated during the Restoration, and republished the works of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholic authors as antidotes.²⁹ Cheap reprints of a book by the *conventionnel* Charles Dupuis, *L'Origine de tous les cultes ou Religion universelle* (1795), which sought the origin of all gods and cults, including Christianity, in ancient Egypt's veneration of the sun, the moon and the stars, also landed on the pyres of the missionaries.³⁰

In fact, not all the French had lost contact with the Catholic Church during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era. Napoleon had taken care not to estrange himself from the Catholics. The *Concordat* of 1801 had re-established Catholicism as religion of the majority of the French people, but not as the state religion, so that in theory all religions possessed equal status and liberty. It had also given Christian religion the double function of social cement and the most important institution to teach loyalty to the government.³¹

Freemasonry, proscribed during the later years of the French Revolution, had become an accepted creed during the Napoleonic era. To those who had become estranged from the Catholic Church, freemasonry had offered possibilities to meet like-minded persons, and to discuss theories on the origin of religion such

²⁸ Ibid., 76-96.

²⁹ For the history and background of these book burnings see Martin Lyons, *Reading Culture and Writing Practices in Nineteenth-Century France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 65-91.

³⁰ Charles-François Dupuis, *L'Origine de tous les cultes ou Religion universelle*, 3 vols. (Paris: Agasse, 1795); Lyons, *Reading Culture and Writing Practices in Nineteenth-Century France*, 82.

³¹ Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Napoléon et les cultes: Les religions en Europe à l'aube du XIXe siècle, 1800-1815* (Paris: Fayard, 2002), 44-46.

as those of Charles Dupuis. Napoleon's protection of the freemasons had partly served to canalise and control their opposition to the re-establishment of the Catholic Church.³² The Bonaparte and Beauharnais families had both been active in freemasonry even before the Revolution. During the Consulate and the Empire their members took leading positions in freemasonry, in order to transform it into an instrument of veneration of Napoleon³³ for the ambitious civil servants and officers who served him. Freemasonry shared this role with the new nobility of merit and the *Légion d'honneur*. Military masonic lodges had allowed officers of the occupying French army to spy, to fraternise with freemasons belonging to the social elites of occupied territories, and to win over their "benighted" countries to the achievements of the French Revolution.³⁴ Almost to the end of the Empire many soldiers regarded Napoleon as the defender of these achievements.

During the Bourbon Restoration freemasons were in general loyal to the government, but some masonic lodges became a refuge for its opponents among students, professional men, serving soldiers, and soldiers whose career had been ended by the return of the Bourbons.³⁵ The secret society of the *Carbonari*, which during the early eighteen-twenties tried to infiltrate the army to overthrow the Bourbon monarchy, concealed itself behind these oppositional lodges, notably *Les amis de la vérité* (the Friends of Truth).³⁶

³² Boudon, *Napoléon et les cultes*, 53. For the publication history and influence of Dupuis's book see Claude Rétat, "Lumières et ténèbres du citoyen Dupuis," *Chroniques de l'histoire maçonnique* no. 50 (1999): 5-68.

³³ Boudon, *Napoléon et les cultes*, 50-53.

³⁴ Jean-Luc Quoy-Bodin, "Le militaire en Maçonnerie (XVIIIème siècle-XIXe siècle)," *Histoire, économie et société* 2, no. 2-4 (1983): 549-76, esp. 569-70.

³⁵ Albert Lantoin, *Histoire de la franc-maçonnerie française: La franc-maçonnerie dans l'état* (Paris: Nourry, 1935), 227-253; Alan B. Spitzer, *Old Hatreds and Young Hopes: The French Carbonari against the Bourbon Restoration* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 55-56; Quoy-Bodin, "Le militaire en Maçonnerie," 573.

³⁶ Spitzer, *Old Hatreds and Young Hopes*, 100, 190-92, 212, 219-24, 230, 232, 276.

During the Restoration liberals believed that the Jesuits and a pious charitable lay organisation closely associated with this order, the *Congrégation Sancta Maria auxilium christianorum* (Congregation Holy Mary Help of Christians),³⁷ secretly ruled the country. They were partly right: the *Congrégation* recruited its members among the royalist aristocracy and had ties with the Missions.³⁸ Within its ranks had evolved a secret society, the *Chevaliers de la foi* (Knights of Faith), which had worked towards Napoleon's downfall.³⁹ The last Bourbon king, the pious and conservative Charles X, sympathised with the ultra-royalists, who idealised the monarchy of the ancien régime and wished to restore it, with the *Congrégation* and with the Jesuits. Towards the end of his reign his liberal opponents suspected him of planning a *coup d'état* that would enable him to rule without the Constitutional Charter.⁴⁰ Although the country had a parliament, the *Chambre des députés*, this Charter had not been the outcome of a democratic process; instead of this, after the return of the Bourbons it had been granted to the people by the king. When the king should decide to rule without the Charter, constitutional monarchy would end and absolutism return.

Royalists and liberals did not only have their own festivities, legal and secret organisations, but also their own martyrs. The great royalist martyr was Charles X's son, the duc de Berry, who was murdered in early 1820 by Pierre Louvel, a Bonapartist saddler who worked in the Royal Stables. Berry's dying bed and last words formed the subject of many royalist propagandistic illustrations (ill. 6). Louvel was obsessed with the idea that he had to kill this prince, the only member of a family plagued by infertility who could be

³⁷ Charles Alexandre Geoffroy de Grandmaison, *La Congrégation, 1801-1830* (Paris: Plon, 1889), 14, 191.

³⁸ Geoffroy de Grandmaison, *La Congrégation*, 180.

³⁹ Spitzer, *Old Hatreds and Young Hopes*, 32, 69.

⁴⁰ David H. Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), 9.

expected to father a male heir to the throne. His self-sacrifice had been in vain; nearly eight months after her husband's death the Duchess of Berry gave birth to the son who could continue the Bourbon line. This son was exalted by royalist poets as *L'Enfant du Miracle* (The Miracle Child).⁴¹ His execution made Louvel a martyr for the liberal cause; he shared his martyrdom with the Four Sergeants of La Rochelle, who were executed in 1822 for their alleged share in the Carbonari plot,⁴² and high Napoleonic officers such as Marshal Michel Ney and General Charles de La Bédoyère, who had been shot as traitors for defecting to Napoleon during the Hundred Days.



6 Langlumé: Mort de S.A.R. Monseigneur Le Duc de Berry. Lithograph, 17,7 x 31 cm. 1820. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

During the Restoration, resentment against the Bourbons and their entourage

was long kept in check by the economic prosperity that lasted from 1817 to 1824. However, the years 1825- '26 saw the start of an economic crisis that lasted until well after the Bourbon dynasty's downfall in 1830. It caused huge unemployment and steeply rising food prices.⁴³ In Paris problems were worsened by the fact that the city's population had seen a sharp increase since 1800. In the labouring quarters this caused a high degree of overpopulation and social disorganisation, with high crime and mortality rates as its most telling symptoms. More than once rioting crowds or anonymous messages,

⁴¹ G[uillaume] de Bertier de Sauvigny, *La Restauration* (Paris: Flammarion, 1955), 221, 231-32.

⁴² Spitzer, *Old Hatreds and Young Hopes*, 170-75.

⁴³ Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 59-60.

posted in the poor quarters of Paris, accused Charles X of forcing up grain prices and starving his people deliberately. One such message read: “*Vive Napoléon*; war to the death on Charles X and the priests who want to starve us to death.”⁴⁴ Not only the desperately poor, but also the middle classes and the rich suffered problems and loss of income. They too blamed the government; during elections the liberal opposition became increasingly popular with men who had formerly voted royalist.⁴⁵

In 1830 the conservative Polignac cabinet made a last desperate attempt to restore the popularity of the Bourbon monarchy; it began a war that caused a significant reduction of the number of soldiers that it had at its disposal in France. The French invasion of Algeria and the conquest of Algiers in early July 1830, which marked the beginning of the French colonial empire in Africa, were calculated to inspire a wave of patriotism over a victory reminiscent of those of the Napoleonic armies. The conquest ended a long-existing conflict with Algeria over trade, smuggling, piracy, and white Christian slavery. It was also France’s revenge for the way in which in 1827 the *Dey* (the Ottoman viceroy) of Algiers had grossly offended the French ambassador by gently slapping his face with his fan. The government’s costly bid for popularity made the liberals distrust it even more, although they also claimed the conquest of Algiers as a people’s victory.⁴⁶ Almost at the same moment as the news of this conquest the results of the elections of June 1830 reached Paris. These elections had drawn alarming numbers of new voters to the liberal opposition in the *Chambre des députés*. The government reacted to this news with the *Four Ordinances*: the rules for determining the eligibility of

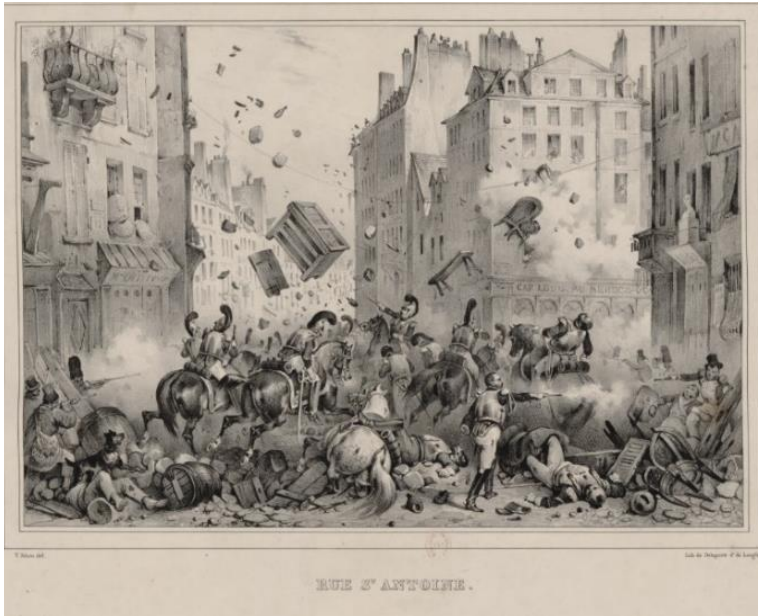
⁴⁴ Cited *ibid.*, 65.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-18, 40.

voters were changed, so that rural conservative landholders' votes would gain more weight, the liberty of the press was suppressed, the newly elected assembly was dissolved, and new elections were announced for September.

7 Delaporte: Rue Saint-Antoine. Lithograph, 1830. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.



When these measures were published in the newspapers on Monday 26 July, when the king was hunting near his castle of Saint-Cloud, they were interpreted by opponents of the Bourbons as the *coup d'état* that they had been expecting.⁴⁷ Out of protest against the Four Ordinances, designed to curb their political influence, business owners shuttered their factories and turned out their workers. During the scorching hot last days of July these suddenly unemployed men started a popular insurrection in Paris;⁴⁸ it gained momentum very quickly and resulted within three days in the final overthrow of the Bourbons. Fighting began on the 27th, but only on the next day a

⁴⁷ Ibid., 42-43, 90.

⁴⁸ Daniel L. Rader, *The Journalists and the July Revolution in France: The Role of the Political Press in the Overthrow of the Bourbon Restoration, 1827-1830* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973), 230.

barricade war developed. The insurgents were reputedly guided by the strategic insight of veterans from Napoleon's army;⁴⁹ they erected a wood of barricades to trap the badly led government soldiers in the narrow streets, where these men became easy victims for snipers, and for heavy household items that were thrown at them from upper windows. The fight of the inhabitants of the Rue Saint-Antoine in the poor eastern part of Paris against the royal troops, and the effect of their strategy in this narrow thoroughfare inspired several artists. (ill. 7) Many soldiers refused to fire on the insurgents or changed sides.⁵⁰ Lists of victims show that skilled artisans and a few students fought on the barricades; the middle classes and the desperately poor were both absent.⁵¹ Although there were republicans among the barricade fighters, most insurgents were inspired by a wave of nationalism that was based on memories of France's greatness and military glory during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era, and hatred of the Bourbons and their foreign allies, "the government of foreign origin and influence which has just ceased," as one revolutionary proclamation put it.⁵²

The patriotic poem *La Tricolore*, written after the July Revolution by the popular Bonapartist poets Auguste-Marseille Barthélemy and Joseph Méry, contains the lines: "Let us tear up the hideous painting of our long withered glories, In the Tuileries France has revenged itself for Waterloo."⁵³ The sudden reappearance of the tricolour, forbidden for fifteen years, was most likely an

⁴⁹ Rader, *The Journalists and the July Revolution in France*, 271.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 231, 233-35, 239.

⁵¹ Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 252-53.

⁵² Cited in Mansel, *Paris Between Empires*, 241.

⁵³ "De nos gloires long-temps flétries
Déchirons le hideux tableau
La France a pris aux Tuileries
Sa revanche de Waterloo." "La Tricolore," in [Auguste-Marseille] Barthélemy and [Joseph] Méry, *L'Insurrection: poème dédié aux Parisiens* (Bruxelles: Hauman, 1830), 25-28.

important trigger for this wave of nationalist sentiment, because the flag could stand symbol for the French nation, the French Revolution's struggle for rights and liberty, the Napoleonic era, and France's military glory.⁵⁴

Only on 30 July, after the insurgents had conquered Paris and the army had evacuated the city, the *Chambre des députés* and *Chambre des pairs* (comparable to Great-Britain's House of Lords) chose Louis-Philippe, duc d'Orléans, as *lieutenant-général* (regent) of France.⁵⁵ The only military force left to guard Paris on 30 July 1830 was the Garde nationale. This militia had been disbanded by Charles X in 1827, when it had shouted abuse against his government,⁵⁶ but it had taken up arms again during the July days. The members of the Garde nationale had offered its command to General La Fayette, the same one who had been elected as its first commander on 15 July 1789. La Fayette set up his headquarters in the Hôtel de ville, as commander of the Garde nationale and head of an improvised municipal government that acted as if it was the national government.⁵⁷ To Louis-Philippe befell the task of riding out to the Hôtel de ville on 31 July to win the support of this improvised government for his election by both Chambers as lieutenant-général and France's next king. La Fayette, who had said earlier that day that he would support a constitutional monarchy, took command of the situation; he draped a tricolour around himself and Louis-Philippe and embraced the new king on one of the balconies of the Hôtel de ville.

Charles X had fled to the castle of Rambouillet, further from Paris than Saint-Cloud. He abdicated on 2 August and took flight, alarmed by news about

⁵⁴ Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 267.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 151-52.

⁵⁶ Guy Antonetti, *Louis-Philippe* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 527-28.

⁵⁷ Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 144-45.

masses of Parisians who, sent by La Fayette, were heading towards Rambouillet. Louis-Philippe was installed as the new king on the 9th. The situation could have developed differently if Charles X had been able to reach the royalist heartland of the Vendée. In Nantes, the gateway to the Vendée, a town that during the French Revolution had suffered greatly from the murderous suppression of the royalist Vendée rebellion, many people had unexpectedly chosen the side of the barricade fighters in Paris. Nantes was the only French town outside Paris where barricades were erected, and victims fell. The royal family now had no choice but to travel to Cherbourg where by order of Louis-Philippe a ship lay waiting to take them to Great-Britain.⁵⁸

Both liberals and royalists feared radical republicanism for its association with revolutionary violence, fanaticism and Robespierre's Reign of Terror.⁵⁹ These fears were assuaged by the installation of a secular constitutional monarchy that held its power from the French people, in which the Crown and the Chambre des députés shared the legislative initiative, censorship was abolished, and the franchise extended.⁶⁰ Taking his example from Napoleon, who had been Emperor of the French, Louis-Philippe was to be known as King of the French instead of King of France and Navarra, the title of his predecessors.⁶¹ This signified that the ownership of their country, of which the French had been robbed during the ancien régime, was returned to them, and that the king could only rule with the people's consent.

Other features of Napoleonic France returned too: The Catholic Church ceased to be state religion and became again the religion of the majority of the French

⁵⁸ Ibid., 212-13.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 46-47.

⁶⁰ Mansel, *Paris Between Empires*, 262-63.

⁶¹ Antonetti, *Louis-Philippe*, 607.

people; the freemasons began to court royal protection again. For several years they tried to persuade Louis-Philippe to accept the office of grand master, but throughout his reign he scrupulously avoided any act that would link his name to freemasonry, most likely because both he and his father, who had supported the French Revolution, were suspected of plotting with freemasons to undermine Bourbon rule.⁶² The tricolour became once again the national flag of a French people that, fearing both a new occupation by the nations that had supported the Bourbons and the radical republican spectre that had been awakened, at first largely supported the new government.⁶³ The Garde nationale became the July Monarchy's mainstay; it drew many enthusiastic volunteers, Eugène Delacroix among them.⁶⁴

⁶² Lantoine, *Histoire de la franc-maçonnerie française*, 285-94. Louis-Philippe's father had been grand master of French freemasonry; his support of the French Revolution had led to accusations by royalist writers such as the Jesuit priest Augustin Barruel of his being involved in a masonic plot, together with La Fayette, Sieyès and others, to murder Louis XVI, so that Orléans could take his place as king of France. [Augustin] Barruel, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme*, vol. 5 (Hamburg: Fauche, 1799), 123-126. During the Restoration, the government suspected Louis-Philippe himself of building ties with the freemasons; an anonymous pamphlet warned him openly for any involvement with freemasonry and listed its supposed ill intentions towards monarchy and religion. U.F.D., *Révélation au roi d'un affreux complot, tramé dans les repaires de la Franc-Maçonnerie, contre la religion et le trône: Suivie d'un Avertissement à S.A.R. le Duc d'Orléans, odieusement trompé par la profonde hypocrisie de plusieurs loges maçonniques* (Paris: Hivert, 1827).

⁶³ Mansel, *Paris Between Empires*, 266.

⁶⁴ Eugène Delacroix, *Further Correspondence*, edited by Lee Johnson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 18.

Liberty Leading the People in 1831 and Later Years

Delacroix's political stance in 1830 is probably best described as liberal Bonapartist.⁶⁵ This was the form of Bonapartism that defended constitutional liberties and allied with the liberal opposition during the Restoration; after the July Revolution it supported the new king Louis-Philippe.⁶⁶ Delacroix's enlistment in the Garde nationale shortly after the July Revolution points to his wish to protect the new regime against "Republic mongers." He used this term in a letter to his nephew Charles de Verninac, started on 17 August and completed on 4 September 1830, in which he gives his opinion on the July Revolution and the events that took place in its aftermath.⁶⁷ He avows his admiration for the new king and, self-consciously, for the well-organised Garde nationale: "In addition to the king's sincerity, of which everyone is convinced, the general situation will be protected by the truly admirable discipline and order of the Garde nationale."⁶⁸

In a slightly later letter, dated 13 October, to his brother Charles-Henry, the aide-de-camp to Prince Eugène for whom Napoleon's downfall had meant the end of his career, Delacroix wrote: "I have started work on a modern subject, a barricade (...) and if I haven't won [battles] for my country, I will at least paint for it."⁶⁹ This remark implies that taking the lead in the innovation of history painting by developing a modern approach to national themes

⁶⁵ Alan B. Spitzer, "Delacroix in his Generation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Delacroix*, edited by Beth S. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 12.

⁶⁶ Theodore Zeldin, *The Political System of Napoléon III* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1958), 5, 53-76.

⁶⁷ "feseurs de république." Delacroix, *Further Correspondence*, 17. The letter was first published in Lee Johnson, "Eugène Delacroix and Charles de Verninac: An Unpublished Portrait and New Letters," *The Burlington Magazine* 110 (September 1968): 511-18.

⁶⁸ "Ce qui sauvera la chose publique c'est sans contredit, outre la bonne foi du roi dont tout le monde est convaincu, la tenue et l'organisation de la garde nationale qui est vraiment admirable." Delacroix, *Further Correspondence*, 18.

⁶⁹ "J'ai entrepris un sujet moderne, une barricade (...) et si je n'ai pas vaincu pour la patrie, au moins peindrai-je pour elle." Eugène Delacroix, *Lettres intimes*, edited by Alfred Dupont (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 191.

provided Delacroix with a possibility to emulate his brother's bravery and patriotism. In other words, the painting was to be the artistic equivalent of the *action d'éclat* (brilliant action) that had won soldiers the cross of the Légion d'honneur during the Napoleonic era.

Delacroix's comparison of artistic creation with military heroism resembles contemporary Saint-Simonist ideas on the social role of artists. Artists would form the *avant-garde* (vanguard) of social change, because the arts aimed for the heart and the imagination. For this reason, they were the most expeditious arms that a society had at its disposal.⁷⁰ Delacroix may have felt flattered by Saint-Simonism's equation of artists with swift, brave vanguard soldiers; during the Napoleonic era these soldiers had been extolled as typically French heroes. Although *Liberty Leading the People* does not promote Saint-Simonism's utopian socialist ideology, this one attractive idea may have greatly influenced its creation.

Delacroix's wish to paint for his country proves that his enthusiasm and patriotism had not yet waned during the autumn of 1830 when he painted his tribute to the July Revolution. In a letter of 6 December to his good friend Félix Guillemardet, Delacroix wrote that the painting was nearly finished,⁷¹ so that we may assume that *Liberty Leading the People* was ready long before the opening of the Salon in the spring of 1831. It was created during a period when supporters of the new government did not only fear "Republic mongers," but also an uprising of Bourbon sympathisers or a military attack by one of the foreign powers that had supported the Bourbons.⁷²

⁷⁰ Paul Wood, "The Avant-Garde from the July Monarchy to the Second Empire," in *The Challenge of the Avant-Garde*, edited by Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 36.

⁷¹ Eugène Delacroix, *Correspondance générale*, edited by André Joubin, vol. 1 (Paris: Plon, 1935), 262.

⁷² Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 332-33.

With a painting in honour of the revolution that had brought Louis-Philippe, duc d'Orléans, to power, and that expressed Delacroix's courage, originality and patriotism, the painter probably hoped to win the support of the new king, who had already commissioned a painting from Delacroix before the July Revolution.

Louis-Philippe was a close relative of the Bourbons. After Louis XIV had decreed in 1709 that the House of Orléans, the descendants of his only brother, would inherit the throne when the Bourbon line would become extinct or unable to rule, the relationship between the Bourbons and these ambitious relatives had often been tense. In 1793 Louis-Philippe's father had even voted for the execution of King Louis XVI; Louis-Philippe himself had been a teen-aged general in the Revolutionary armies. In the battles at Valmy (20 September 1792) and Jemappes (6 November 1792) he had fought against the Prussians and Austrians, who had combined forces to restore the Bourbons to power.⁷³ During the reign of Charles X, Louis-Philippe's art collection had become a showcase for his political and dynastic ambitions; he posed as friend of the liberals and founder of the next ruling dynasty. With an eye to his financial and dynastic interests he also showed great loyalty to the king,⁷⁴ who had privately recognised Louis-Philippe as throne candidate immediately after the Miracle Child.⁷⁵ The duc d'Orléans opposed the Bourbons' interest in religious monarchic history painting with his own preference for scenes from the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era. In 1824 the government, fearing politically motivated competition to royal art patronage from Louis-Philippe and other private collectors, decided to acquire Delacroix's

⁷³ Antonetti, *Louis-Philippe*, 208-19.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 519-22.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 517.

controversial *Massacres at Chios*.⁷⁶ In the same year Louis-Philippe bought Horace Vernet's paintings of the battles at Valmy and Jemappes, and Géricault's *Charging Officer of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval of the Imperial Guard* (ill. 37) and *Wounded Cuirassier Leaving the Field of Battle*.

Liberty Leading the People is not only an allegory of the people's victory of July 1830, but also one of Louis-Philippe himself and of the principles that the July Monarchy officially defended: a kingship that was held in check by Constitution and parliament, and that upheld religious and political liberty. In practice Louis-Philippe's government proved unable to end the troubles that had already plagued France, and particularly the poor quarters of the cities, before the Revolution. Radical, violent republicanism was well on its way to become a strong, well-organised resistance movement to the government even before the opening of the Salon of 1831. This Salon took place against a background of almost permanent rioting in the streets of Paris; in its attempt to re-establish order the newly-formed Périer Cabinet suppressed riots with increasing violence.⁷⁷ In this threatening political situation *Liberty Leading the People*, a painting that defied Classical convention and that depicts, at first sight, only a rag-dressed revolutionary mob, could be claimed for the radical cause. It could equally become the object of reviews by critics who revenged themselves for Delacroix's satire of their profession and ideas by deliberately understanding the painting only at this most superficial level. Likely just as deliberately they classed the painter with the political radicals to which he did not belong.⁷⁸ Critics who really considered *Liberty Leading the*

⁷⁶ Elisabeth A. Fraser, *Delacroix: Art and Patrimony in Post-Revolutionary France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 78-114, 165-71. See also Valérie Bajou, "A Hagiographic Collection: Remarks on the Taste of Louis-Philippe, Duc d'Orléans," *Getty Research Journal* 5 (2013): 55-72.

⁷⁷ See f.i. Madeleine Bourset, *Casimir Perier: Un prince financier au temps du Romantisme* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1994), 232-33.

⁷⁸ Hadjinicolaou, "La Liberté guidant le peuple de Delacroix devant son premier public," 14-21.

People a political threat may have associated it with the street war of the spring of 1831 as much as with that of the preceding year.

The painting's removal from the walls of the Luxembourg Gallery in 1832, where it had been on show after its acquisition in 1831, not by the king but, for a fee, by the Interior Ministry,⁷⁹ and its return by the government to Delacroix in 1839 can be understood as the acts of an unstable government under an ever-growing threat of insurrection, which had no need for displays of revolutionary violence. Delacroix had miscalculated the impression that *Liberty Leading the People* would make only a few months after its completion. The political situation of the spring of 1831 was no longer that of the autumn of 1830, Louis-Philippe's popularity was already waning, and political radicalism now threatened his government more than foreign powers or Bourbon sympathisers.

In *Liberty Leading the People*, Delacroix flattered Louis-Philippe by referring to paintings in the Orléans collection, notably Géricault's *Charging Officer of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval of the Imperial Guard*, and to the king's past as a young revolutionary general. Unfortunately, he misjudged the sensitivities of a man who was no longer an ambitious duke but the new head of state. Delacroix did not portray Louis-Philippe recognisably as a hero and founder of a new dynasty; instead he depicted ragged barricade fighters and a virago, images that brought the French Revolution to mind. Taking his inspiration from Grandville's animal caricatures from before and directly after the July Revolution, he ridiculed Louis-Philippe's relatives the Bourbons, their followers, their Catholic state religion, and the artists who had worked for

⁷⁹ Michael Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe: Art and Ideology in Orleanist France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 68, 240.

them. The fraught political situation of 1831, the painting's demonisation by critics, and its indebtedness to caricaturists who had already turned their attention to the new king before the opening of the Salon of 1831,⁸⁰ also explain Louis-Philippe's lack of interest.

In my opinion, Delacroix referred to Grandville's anti-Bourbon political caricatures in *Liberty Leading the People* partly to express his aversion to a career as slavish propaganda painter. In this painting he settled old scores with Ingres and other painters, notably Eugène Delacroix, who, during the Restoration, had overshadowed his own successes with their servile religious and non-religious propaganda paintings for a monarchy in which they may not even have believed. Although Delacroix had also accepted commissions for paintings from the Bourbons, these works had brought him trouble instead of triumph. Despite its lukewarm reception of *Liberty Leading the People*, the new government bestowed the cross of the *Légion d'honneur* on Delacroix; Ingres had won his already in 1824.

⁸⁰ Grandville's first caricature of Louis-Philippe was published in *La Caricature* of 17 February, 1831. Clive F. Getty, *The Diary of J.J. Grandville and the Missouri Album: The Life of an Opposition Caricaturist and Romantic Book Illustrator in Paris under the July Monarchy* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010), 55.

La Curée

In this and the next chapter I will examine the two most important contemporary literary and artistic inspirations for *Liberty Leading the People*. I will begin with Auguste Barbier's poem *La Curée*, that was published in the *Revue de Paris* of 19 September 1830. This poem depicts the barricade fighters as savage mythological hunters, and satirises events that took place in Paris immediately after the July Revolution. Although, as has been remarked, other authors also mention its influence on *Liberty Leading the People*, Delacroix may have been interested in this poem for more reasons than have been suggested until now.

Liberty Leading the People pays homage to the sudden emergence during the July Revolution of the Parisian crowd as an independent historical force. In the aftermath of the July Revolution, the Louis-Philippe-supporting liberal bourgeoisie recognised the importance of the ordinary working men who had fought on the barricades for the success of the revolution. At the same time, it regarded the inhabitants of the poorest quarters as savages and barbarians. Although industrious skilled artisans, especially those from the slightly more affluent quartier Saint-Antoine, counted as virtuous working men, this image could not efface the memory of the mob violence of which they had been capable during the French Revolution.⁸¹

Poets who supported the new government, such as Victor Hugo, Casimir Delavigne and Népomucène Lemercier, praised the Parisian populace for its restraint during the July Revolution, and urged for peace and further

⁸¹ Jakobowicz, 1830, *Le Peuple de Paris*, 34-43.

restraint.⁸² In their poems they attempted to bury France's violent past for ever by a double procedure, first conjuring it up and then contrasting it with the present.⁸³ Their works abound with tributes to the "heroic," "sacred" or "sublime" *canaille* of Paris, the tricolour, the Revolution and Napoleon, the restraining role played by the educated youth of Paris, past wrongs and inequalities that justified violence, and present-day peace and justice that obviate the need for violence. Their message is clear: during the July Revolution the decent, heroic artisan and the young intellectual fraternised and fought for the emancipation of France and its people; although they are weak, harmless and normally fearful, even old people, children, and women, the allegorical embodiments of Liberty, helped them in their fight.⁸⁴ France's new rulers are now taking control, ordinary people can go home. Delacroix's hatred of "Republic mongers" leaves little doubt that he, too, wished for a speedy return to order and feared further violent outbreaks. Yet, his own painting commemorating the July Revolution seems to glorify the *sublime canaille*; it does not cast students or other representatives of the higher social classes as heroes or pacifiers.

Although it forms part of the wave of celebratory poetry that followed the July Revolution, *La Curée* (The Quarry) was far more daring than the works

⁸² Jennifer Birkett and James Kearns, *A Guide to French Literature: From Early Modern to Post-Modern* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 132; Jakobowicz, 1830, *Le Peuple de Paris*, 184-89.

⁸³ Isabelle Tournier, "Le moment Barbier ou la 'vérité' de Juillet," *Romantisme* 30, no. 110 (2000): 101-15, esp. 114-15.

⁸⁴ Népomucène Lemercier, "Le triomphe national," *Revue de Paris*, no. 17 (1830): 212-22:

"Mais tous brûlent de noble ivresse.

La mort, volant partout, ne peut faire pâlir

Le jeune âge, ni la vieillesse,

Ni ce sexe adoré qu'Amour fait tressaillir."

and Casimir Delavigne, "Une semaine à Paris," *Revue de Paris*, no. 18 (1830): 217-26:

"Il court, il va mourir...Relevons le mourant:

O Liberté....C'est une femme!"

of Lemercier and his ilk. *La Curée* brought Barbier overnight popular success and recognition as a great poet. The literary critic Philarète Chasles would later call Barbier's poem a "sublime cry of rage;"⁸⁵ its original allegorical imagery showed "male frankness in thoughts and images, disdain for all conventions, rejection of all the gilded rags of rhetoric."⁸⁶ In my view, it was the successful unconventionality of *La Curée* that challenged Delacroix to paint an equally modern and unconventional allegory to commemorate the end of the ancien régime and the beginning of a new era, a masterpiece that would enable France to regain the military spirit and artistic leadership that her enemies had tried to rob from her after Napoleon's downfall.

Doubtlessly, Delacroix was also deeply interested in the poem's subject. *La Curée* stands out among the poetry written in commemoration of the July Revolution not just for its artistic daring, but equally because it criticises the dismissal of the barricade fighters once they had done their work and does not cast the students who fought on the barricades as pacifiers. Instead, an indignant Barbier contrasted the sublime canaille's fight on the barricades with the infighting for government jobs that began only a few days after the end of the barricade war.⁸⁷

Delacroix shared Barbier's indignation over this job hunt. In the letter to his nephew Charles de Verninac that I have cited before, Delacroix had written on 4 September (two weeks before the publication of *La Curée*) that he did not envy Louis-Philippe. "The job applicants come out of the earth like snails after

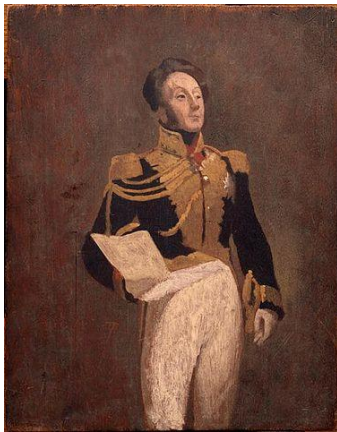
⁸⁵ "...sublime cri de rage..." [Philarète Chasles], Préface des éditeurs in *Iambes*, by Auguste Barbier (Paris: Urbain Canel et Ad. Guyot, 1832), XI.

⁸⁶ "...cette nudité mâle de pensées et d'images, ce dédain de toutes les formes convenues, ce rejet de tous les haillons dorées de la rhétorique..." Chasles, Préface *Iambes*, XII.

⁸⁷ Tournier, "Le moment Barbier," 105.

the rain. It is a universal craze and surely many wrong choices will be made.”⁸⁸ As a Bonapartist, Delacroix did not mistrust the officers and civil servants who had served Napoleon and who now wished to resume their careers. He and Barbier pointed their anger at the thousands of people, among whom many journalists, novelists, and scholars, who in the immediate aftermath of the July Revolution besieged ministries and influential persons to demand a government job in reward for real or feigned opposition to the Bourbons.⁸⁹

8 Attr. to François-Joseph Heim: Sosthène de La Rochefoucauld. Oil on panel. 27,4 x 21,4 cm. Ca. 1824. Paris: Musée du Louvre.



Delacroix, who strove for artistic independence and leadership, seems to have been convinced that the ministers and civil servants who were responsible for the Bourbon arts administration were just as incompetent as the royalist officers who held commands in the armed forces. He despised the ridiculously elegant vicomte Sosthène de La Rochefoucauld (ill. 8), *directeur des beaux-arts* from 1824 to 1830 and an ultra-royalist. The prudish La Rochefoucauld ordered the nude statues in the Tuileries gardens to be covered; he was a member of both the Congrégation and the Chevaliers de la foi.⁹⁰ After an unpleasant interview between him and the *directeur des beaux-arts*, Delacroix referred to him as “that imbecile” in a letter to a friend.⁹¹ La Rochefoucauld had called Delacroix into his office after the scandal that *The Death of Sardanapalus* had caused at the Salon of 1827, to warn him that the government could no longer support his work when he

⁸⁸ “Les solliciteurs sortent de dessous terre comme les colimaçons après la pluie. C’est une rage universelle et tu penses qu’il se fait beaucoup de mauvais choix.” Delacroix, *Further Correspondence*, 18.

⁸⁹ Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 284, 289-94.

⁹⁰ José Cabanis, *Charles X: Roi ultra* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 129-31, 263.

⁹¹ Letter to Charles Soulier, dated 26 April 1828, in Delacroix, *Correspondance générale*, vol. 1, 217.

would not change his manner of painting.⁹² The art critics who had reviled *Sardanapalus* and other works by Delacroix might well turn out to be new La Rochefoucaulds who would equally bully artists after they had landed in a job in the arts administration of the July Monarchy.

Barbier's poem counts first and foremost as the source for Delacroix's powerful image of the Goddess of Liberty. In *La Curée*, the female personification of Liberty, who had been so popular during the French Revolution and who had inspired Napoleon's army, suddenly reappears during the July Days "within our bullet-ridden walls" to "dry our tear-filled eyes."⁹³ She is not a woman who under other circumstances would be weak and harmless, "not a countess from the noble Faubourg Saint-Germain,"⁹⁴ but "a strong woman with powerful breasts, with raucous voice and austere charms, who, brown skinned and fiery-eyed, agile and walking with great strides, thrives on the shouts of the people and the bloody hand-to-hand fighting."⁹⁵ She "takes her lovers only from the populace;"⁹⁶ Barbier compares the love of liberty that she inspires in them with animal rut. This strong, sexualised allegory of Liberty, with her rag-dressed, ferocious, heroic followers, who "hurled themselves forward into immortality,"⁹⁷ is contrasted with the effeminate, dandyish elegance of those who profited from the July Revolution: "These men in corsets, these women's

⁹² Eugène Delacroix, *Essais sur les artistes célèbres*, vol. 2 of *Oeuvres littéraires*, edited by Élie Faure (Paris: Crès, 1923), 226.

⁹³ "Dans nos murs mitraillés tout à coup réparue,
Vient de sécher nos yeux en pleurs..."

⁹⁴ "C'est que la liberté n'est pas une comtesse
Du noble faubourg Saint-Germain."

⁹⁵ "...une forte femme aux puissantes mamelles,
A la voix rauque, aux durs appas,
Qui, du brun sur la peau, du feu dans les prunelles,
Agile et marchant à grands pas
Se plaît aux cris du peuple, aux sanglantes mêlées..."

⁹⁶ "...ne prend ses amours que dans la populace..."

⁹⁷ "...se ruaient à l'immortalité..."

faces.”⁹⁸ Barbier portrays the ordinary Parisians who fought during the Trois Glorieuses as ferocious hunters with an animal sexuality, and the elegant gentlemen, “heroes of the Boulevard de Gand” (the Parisian centre of elegant entertainment, ill. 9), who hid behind their curtains, as hunting dogs.



9 Georges-Jacques Gatine: *Le Boulevard de Gand à Paris*. Hand-coloured etching. 21,4 x 30,3 cm. Before 1825. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Like hunting dogs fighting for their part of the quarry during the ceremonial feeding of the killed animals’ entrails to the hounds at the end of the hunt,⁹⁹ they fight for the government jobs now left vacant, but their fight takes place in the salons of Paris and not in the streets. Once home again, they throw their piece of the carcass of Bourbon rule, the boar who lies slain in the streets of Paris, their “piece of kingship,”¹⁰⁰ to their proud bitches.

Emulation of the powerful, politically charged hunting allegory of *La Curée* in a serious allegorical painting posed a challenging problem; until now this has been overlooked in the literature on *Liberty Leading the People*. While according to Classical art theory in a poem the powerful image of Liberty and her following of desperate, rag-dressed hunters could be contrasted with the ridiculous elegance of the job-hunting heroes of the Boulevard de Gand, in a history painting or allegory the contrasts of *La Curée* could not be visualised.

⁹⁸ “...Ces hommes en corsets, ces visages de femmes...”

⁹⁹ See f.i. Shao-Chien Tseng, “Contested Terrain: Gustave Courbet’s Hunting Scenes,” *The Art Bulletin* 90, no. 2 (2008): 218-34, esp. 220.

¹⁰⁰ “...part de royauté...”

Caricature of contemporary fashion and elegant life would have to be juxtaposed with a heroic allegorical image of the barricade war of the July days, the ephemeral with the eternal.

Delacroix took up this challenge. Emulation of the allegory of Liberty with her rag-dressed lovers which dominates *La Curée* enabled him to make the repulsive but momentary reality of the barricade war the bearer of the eternal historical significance of the July Revolution, and so did Barbier's find of depicting the barricade fight as a savage, half-mythological boar hunt. Delacroix replaced the boar who lies slain in the streets of Paris by the monsters of Psalm 91, the lion, the dragon and the serpent, painting them, in line with Boileau's ideas on allegory, as pleasing monsters, dandies and other fashion victims, who yet do not look as if they have stepped out of a fashion plate.

Although these dandified monsters represent the defunct Bourbon monarchy, they also enable Delacroix to ridicule, just as Barbier had done, the critics and other well-educated, mediocre but elegant people who elbowed themselves into positions of authority before and after the July Revolution. Delacroix suspected art critics and men such as La Rochefoucauld of looking down on artisans and artists who worked with their hands.

In his essay "Des critiques en matière d'art," published in the *Revue de Paris* in May 1829, Delacroix already compares critics to lions in the arena against whom artists are defenceless. He also contrasts the professional knowledge of artists, *gens du métier* (meaning professionals, insiders, but also artisans), with the arrogant theorising of critics, who stand between the public and the artists like "watchful dragons" who "strike you down with the line of beauty." French art theory advised artists to use this line of beauty, the movement-suggesting

serpentine contours of Classical standing statuary, when they depicted the human body.¹⁰¹

I will end this chapter on *La Curée* with a few remarks on satirical prints and writings that may have influenced both Barbier's poem and Delacroix's emulation of its hunting allegory. The French public of 1830/31, familiar with anti-Bourbon pamphlets and caricatures, would have understood that Barbier juxtaposed the courage of the badly-armed barricade fighters, who usurp the traditional noble and royal privilege to hunt *la grosse bête* (big game such as deer and boar),¹⁰² not just with the cowardice of the job hunters, but also with the cruelty and cowardice of their aged ex-king. During and after the French Revolution the hunt had come to stand as a symbol of the lifestyle of the ancien régime nobility. The connexion that anti-Bourbon pamphlets made between Charles X's passion for hunting, which had earned him the nickname *Robin-des-Bois* (Robin Hood), and his alleged cruelty, lived on for many years after the end of Bourbon rule;¹⁰³ caricaturists made good use of it. One caricature, created in the aftermath of the July Revolution, shows the rabbits in the forest of Rambouillet, which seems to have changed into a fairy-tale wood where the treetops have faces, dancing around the liberty tree while one of them plays the hunting horn. They watch Charles X depart, shaking his fist at them and at the deer, who either threaten him with their antlers or bow him out in imitation of human behaviour (ill. 10).

¹⁰¹ Reprinted in Eugène Delacroix, *Études esthétiques*, vol. 1 of *Oeuvres littéraires*, 1-7. See also Élisabeth Lavezzi, "Diderot et Hogarth: La pyramide et la ligne serpentine," in *Les Salons de Diderot: Théorie et écriture*, edited by Pierre Frantz and Élisabeth Lavezzi (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2008), 73-90, esp. 76.

¹⁰² See f. i. Robert Joseph Pothier's treatises on civil law and property law, *Traité sur différentes matières de droit civil appliquées à l'usage du barreau et de jurisprudence Française*, vol. 4 (Paris: Debure and Orléans Rouzeau-Montau, 1781), 356. See also Corry Cropper, *Playing at Monarchy: Sport as Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century France* (Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press), 88-89.

¹⁰³ Cropper, *Playing at Monarchy*, 91-94, 99-100; Jakobowicz, *1830, Le Peuple de Paris*, 199-200.



10 Langlumé: “Jeunes et vieux lapins, nous sommes libres; Vivent les bons enfants.” Coloured lithograph. 18 x 25 cm. 1830. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

In a violently anti-Bourbon pamphlet that was published in the immediate aftermath of the July Revolution, entitled *Histoire impartiale et véridique de Charles X surnommé le Robin-des-Bois, par un ex-officier des chasseurs*,¹⁰⁴ Charles X is portrayed as a weak-minded old bigot who lived under the protection of the countries that had waged war on Revolutionary and Napoleonic France. Lacking real enemies to fight, he spent all his time killing and maiming the peaceful inhabitants of the royal woods, especially small ones such as rabbits. Since state affairs did not have his interest, between two hunting parties he blindly signed “liberticidal” measures conceived by others.¹⁰⁵ The *ex-officier des chasseurs* who had written this pamphlet disclosed

¹⁰⁴ *Histoire impartiale et véridique de Charles X surnommé le Robin-des-Bois, par un ex-officier des chasseurs* (Paris: Chassaignon, 1830). In this pamphlet Charles X’s biography ends with his arrival by ship at Cowes on 17 August 1830, to ask for asylum in Great-Britain (Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 179), so that we can assume that the pamphlet was published at the end of August or the beginning of September 1830.

¹⁰⁵ *Histoire impartiale*, 69.

the cost of the ex-king's passion for hunting, more than four million francs during his six-year reign, and accused this Robin Hood of spending huge sums on food for his hunting dogs while giving nothing to alleviate the hunger of the poor during the economic crisis.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

Grandville



XXX.

J' t'ai déjà dit d'examiner le monde... Tu vois bien que c'est des artistes.

11 Grandville: *Métamorphoses du jour* (1869), pl. XXX: “J’ t’ai déjà dit d’examiner le monde... Tu vois bien que c’est des artistes.” Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

I will now turn my attention to what are in my view the most important, and almost completely overlooked, artistic sources of inspiration for *Liberty Leading the People*, Grandville’s satirical prints that depict contemporary Frenchmen as human beings with animal traits. During the last years of the Restoration, the caricaturist Jean-Jacques Grandville became famous with his *Métamorphoses du jour* (“Today’s Metamorphoses” or “Metamorphoses of [Day]light”) 1828/29,¹⁰⁷ a series of coloured lithographs featuring human figures with animal heads which offer wry comments on everyday French life during the Restoration. Delacroix was likely influenced not only by Grandville’s depictions of poor, marginalised people as small despised animals, but also by his visualisations of French proverbs.¹⁰⁸ *La Curée* inspired

¹⁰⁷ (Paris: Bulla, Martinet, 1829). I follow the numbering of the plates used in the edition of 1869: Grandville, *Métamorphoses du jour* [...] précédées d’une notice sur Grandville par Charles Blanc, nouvelle édition revue et complétée pour le texte par Jules Janin (Paris: Garnier, 1869).

¹⁰⁸ For a thorough analysis of Grandville’s procedure see Alexandra K. Wettlaufer, “From Metaphor to Metamorphosis: Visual/Verbal Wordplay and the Aesthetics of Modernity in Grandville’s Caricature,” *Word & Image* 29, no. 4 (2013): 456-86.

Delacroix to depict the barricade fighters as savage hunters driven by an animal lust for liberty, while Grandville's portrayal of the French before 1830 as animals may have inspired him to stress their vulnerability. In *Liberty Leading the People*, on a hot, sunny day in July 1830 these animals seem to have just left their existence as frightened animals to transform into fearless hunters. I will first describe three lithographs from *Métamorphoses du jour* that may have influenced Delacroix. The first comments on the marginal position of artists by depicting them as small, insignificant animals (pl. XXX in ed. 1869, ill. 11). A street musician, a mole, and his companion, a small stray dog, are begging for alms from a group of three artists, rats. Although they may be destined for glory, they are now perhaps even poorer (*gueux comme un rat* - poor as a rat) than the street musician. Because he recognises them as poor brother artists (he is more aware of his surroundings than we would expect) the mole tells the dog not to ask them for money.

12 Grandville: *Les métamorphoses du jour*, first edition: *Grande réjouissance publique*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Library.



The second, *Grande réjouissance publique* (Great public festivity, ill. 12), depicts street urchins who on a festive day climb a mast; the quickest one is a small squirrel who carries a shoulder bag.¹⁰⁹ These children and the onlookers seem to be locked up behind a wooden fence; gendarmes on horseback, who are

¹⁰⁹ This lithograph was published only in the first edition of *Métamorphoses du jour*. See Édouard Meaume, "Notice bibliographique sur les *Métamorphoses du jour* par Grandville," *Bulletin du bibliophile et du bibliothécaire* (1875): 41-51.

portrayed as watchdogs, keep order with drawn sabres. This great public festivity, during which the French seem to be kept under guard, is perhaps the king's name day that never drew enthusiastic crowds during the Restoration.¹¹⁰

13 Grandville: *Métamorphoses du jour* (1869), pl. XLI: "T'as raison Gauthier, c'est pas ceux qu'habitent les bels hôtels qu'est les plus heureux." Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.



XLI.
T'as raison Gauthier, c'est pas ceux qu'habitent les bels hôtels qu'est les plus heureux.

The third one (XLI in ed. 1869, ill. 13) shows the building firm of Beaver Sons (*Castor fils*) hard at work building a rich man's mansion. The high degree of organisation and solidarity that building workers had achieved during the early nineteenth century had earned them the reputation of forming the elite of working men, whose pride and happiness were based on their ability to earn a living with the work of their hands.¹¹¹ Grandville's choice to portray building workers as beavers was likely based on these animals' building skills, but it may have had a second, deeper reason. In freemasonry the beaver is highly regarded as a species whose actions are driven by a basic sense of belonging to a society, one that unites beings with common opinions and interests that have

¹¹⁰ Kroen, *Politics and Theater*, 166.

¹¹¹ Jakobowicz, 1830, *Le Peuple de Paris*, 78-79.

not been forced upon them.¹¹² Grandville depicts two stonemasons, with aprons, caps, and trowels that resemble beaver's tails; the owner of Beaver Sons or the architect, dressed in simple bourgeois costume, listens deferentially to his rich customer, a peacock in court costume. True to the virtuous reputation of building workers, one of the masons remarks that the people who live in mansions are not the happy ones.

Grandville was a republican who fought on the barricades during the July Revolution; for his take on the state of the French people after the July Revolution we must turn to his political caricatures.¹¹³ One of his cartoons, dated 7 August 1830, satirises Charles X's flight from Rambouillet, chased by the Parisian barricade fighters whom La Fayette had sent after him. The cartoon's title *Chasse nationale sur les terres royales* (National Hunt on the Royal Grounds, ill. 14) comments on Charles X's reputation as a hunter, as did the *Histoire impartiale et véridique de Charles X surnommé le Robin-des-Bois*.¹¹⁴ Its title also implies that the king has lost the ownership of France and that the French soil now belongs to the nation.

The text underneath the cartoon says *L'ex-et-lent Roi* (The "exetlent" King or ex-and-slow King). In the right of the image we see the flight of Charles X, his family, ministers, Jesuit priests and courtiers. A signpost at a crossing directs them to the *Allée Charles X* (Go Charles X); the road to Paris is called *Avenue Louis-Philippe* (Louis-Philippe has arrived). Above the signpost a carrier pigeon is setting off with a letter for the army in Algeria. A nearby tree is

¹¹² [Jean-Pierre-Louis Beyerlé], *Essai sur la Franc-Maçonnerie: Ou du but essentiel & fondamental de la F. M.*, vol. 1 (Latomopolis [Nancy]: Xiste Andron, 5788 [1784]), 70. Beyerlé's opinion on beaver society was based on Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*.

¹¹³ Getty, *The Diary of J.J. Grandville and the Missouri Album*, 55.

¹¹⁴ Jakobowicz, 1830, *Le Peuple de Paris*, 199-200, mentions this caricature and a related one by Jules David and Grandville, *La revanche: ou la grande chasse au tir an 1830*.

changing into a many-headed leering monster; in the far background the rectangular shapes of the towers of Notre-Dame, rising above the Parisian cityscape, are visible.



14 Grandville: Chasse nationale sur les Terres Royales (L'ex-et-lent Roi). Coloured lithograph. 20,2 x 32 cm. 1830. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The former rulers of France have left the crown jewels behind, ready to be picked up by the people. Now that their reign is over, they are changing into animals. They have the heads of asses, wolves, bears, cats, dogs, birds, insects, and reptiles. The king still has his own horse-like face, but he is on all fours and carries the Miracle Child (the crown prince or *dauphin*, recognisable by his dolphin's head) on his back.

This caricature of the king mocks several propaganda paintings created during the Restoration; these show King Henry IV, the founder of the Bourbon dynasty, playing piggyback with his children in the presence of his mistress Gabrielle d'Estrées, when the Spanish ambassador suddenly enters the room.

The most famous version of this subject, which was supposed to illustrate Henry IV's simplicity, was painted by Ingres in 1817 (ill. 15), but other painters, for instance Delacroix's good friend Richard Parkes Bonington, also depicted this scene.

15 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: *Henri IV receiving the Spanish ambassador*. Oil on canvas. 39,5 x 50 cm. 1817. Paris: Musée du Petit Palais.

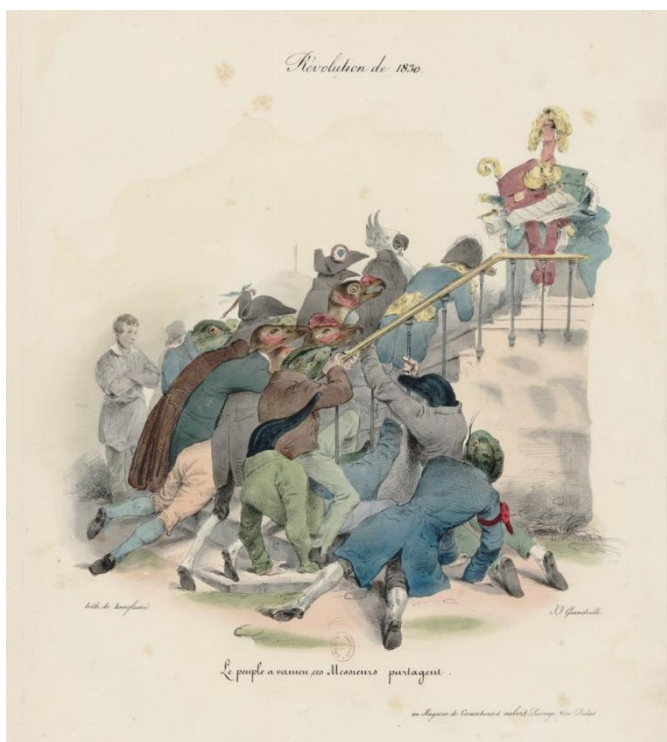


In Grandville's caricature the venom-spitting serpent next to the king is his prime minister Jules de Polignac, the cat is Major-General Marmont who commanded the royal troops during the July Revolution.¹¹⁵ The Duchess of Berry is changing into a she-wolf, and the ghostlike shapes of a rabbit or hare and a small fox appear in her veil; both animals try to get away from the Bourbons as fast as possible.

In the left of the print we see the people of Paris, the hunters, who are coming up a hill. Several of these completely human figures, who proudly carry the tricolour, their rifle, bayonet or sabre, resemble the barricade fighters depicted

¹¹⁵ Information from the on-line catalogue record (no. FRBNF41517695) in *Gallica*, the digital library of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*. The record identifies the she-wolf as the Duchess of Angoulême; in my view her fashion-conscious sister-in-law, the widow of the duc de Berry, is a more likely candidate.

by Delacroix in *Liberty Leading the People* and those depicted by Charlet in *L'Allocution* (ill. 4). We see an artisan who wears an apron and beret and a man wearing a black top hat. In front walk a bespectacled polytechnicien and a gamin de Paris; this boy carries a cartridge pouch, as does the gamin de Paris on the right of Liberty in Delacroix's painting. He also wears the distinctive forage cap of the *voltigeurs* of the Garde nationale; the same cap is worn by the boy who crouches in the lower left corner of *Liberty Leading the People*. The eerie, menacing wood in Grandville's print has the same fairy-tale atmosphere as the wood in the print of the rabbits in the forest of Rambouillet (ill. 10). Although both Delacroix and Charlet evoked the real dangers of the barricade war, they also created an unreal atmosphere in their works; we see buildings, barricade fighters and soldiers emerge like ghosts from a mist of gun smoke.



16 Grandville: *Révolution de 1830; Le peuple a vaincu, ces Messieurs partagent*. Lithograph. 1830. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The job hunt that formed the inspiration for Barbier's *La Curée* is also the subject of one of Grandville's caricatures, *Révolution de 1830: Le peuple a vaincu, ces messieurs partagent* (ill. 16). It shows birds and other small animals who trample each other underfoot while they

eagerly climb a staircase leading to a strange idol that consists of briefcases, epaulettes, sashes, a bishop's staff and other paraphernalia. A humble man of

the people, the only person who has retained (or rather attained) human dignity, stands aside; according to the text beneath the print he complains: “The people have triumphed, these gentlemen are taking their share.”

Grandville’s caricatures from after the July Revolution seem to imply that during the July Days the bestial, imprisoned people whom he depicted in his earlier caricatures transformed into Frenchmen, but he never illustrated this transformation. Delacroix likely noticed this gap and intended *Liberty Leading the People* to fill it, by showing the moment when frightened animals acquire human dignity, as does the caricature of the liberated rabbits of Rambouillet who dance around the liberty tree (ill. 10). In a pamphlet published shortly after the July Revolution, *Lettre d’un lapin de St. Cloud à Charles X sur les inconveniens de trop aimer la chasse*, written by “Jeannot, a philosophising rabbit,”¹¹⁶ this transformation is also implied. It describes the ravages wrought by Charles X from the point of view of the hunted animals themselves, but also the relief felt by the rabbits in the royal woods when they realised that the shooting that they heard right after the July Revolution was a different sort of royal hunt. This time the rabbits were safe, but their enemy was chased away by La Fayette’s Parisians. Now that his noisy tormentor is gone, Jeannot, the hunted rabbit, can collect his thoughts and express his political opinions in writing. He thanks Louis-Philippe for his promise to end the royal hunt.

Summarising, in the chapter on Barbier’s poem *La Curée* I have identified hunting and aggressive animal sexuality as important themes of this poem; I have also indicated that emulation of this poem in a history painting posed

¹¹⁶ Jeannot, *Lettre d’un lapin de St. Cloud à Charles X sur les inconveniens de trop aimer la chasse: Contenant des réflexions morales et politiques sur la grande chasse royale du 29 juillet 1830* (Paris: Chez tous les marchands de nouveautés, 1830); cited extensively in Cropper, *Playing at Monarchy*, 85-87.

problems which Delacroix solved in his own way. In this chapter on Grandville I have pointed to his animal caricatures as an overlooked source for *Liberty Leading the People*. Grandville's animals are not aggressive, but small and vulnerable, with human traits; the July Revolution liberates them from their animality. Both Barbier and Grandville seem to have interpreted the contradictory concept of "people bestial" in a personal way. Their daring and absurd imagery differs strikingly from the dreary realism and fearful idealisation of the pacifying intellectual with which "serious" literary and artistic renditions of the July Revolution abound. Although Delacroix consulted these less imaginative works as well, he likely took his inspiration for the depiction of the barricade fighters as animals who are changing into human beings from Grandville. *Liberty Leading the People* was, then, intended to fill the gap between Grandville's caricatures from before and after July 1830.

Wednesday 28 July

It is now time to begin my exploration of *Liberty Leading the People* itself. In this chapter I will examine the painting's title, which has changed several times. In the Salon catalogue of 1831, the title of the painting is *Le 28 juillet*, and its subtitle or description *La Liberté guidant le peuple*, a title that resembles that of Charlet's print *L'Allocution: Le 28 juillet* (ill. 4). In the earlier inventory of paintings that were admitted to the Salon, which contains Delacroix's own listing of his exhibits, it was called *Le 29 Juillet*, again with *La Liberté guidant le peuple* as its subtitle or description. Neither source contains any further explication of the painting. In Salon reviews it was often called *La Liberté guidant le peuple* or *La Liberté guidant le peuple au 28 juillet*.¹¹⁷ I will try to answer the question why Delacroix ultimately chose 28 July, the day on which history hung in the balance, as the subject of his painting, and not 27 July, the day on which fighting began, or 29 July, the day of victory.

When he was working on *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix was not wholly dependent on written and visual evocations of the July Revolution. Contrary to Barbier's "men in corsets" he was out in the Parisian streets during the *Trois Glorieuses*, but without taking part in the fighting. In his letter to Charles de Verninac, written when his memory of the July Days was still fresh, he writes about the danger that he courted: "An ordinary pedestrian like me ran the same risk of stopping a bullet as did the improvised heroes who marched on the enemy with pieces of iron lashed to broomsticks."¹¹⁸ Delacroix saw and heard in grim reality the dirty, cursing, rag-dressed barricade fighters, black

¹¹⁷ Hadjinicolaou, "*La Liberté guidant le peuple* de Delacroix devant son premier public," 11 (footnote).

¹¹⁸ "Le simple promeneur comme moi avait la chance d'attraper une balle ni plus ni moins que les héros improvisés qui marchaient à l'ennemi avec des morceaux de fer emmanchés dans des manches à balai." Delacroix, *Further Correspondence*, 17.

with powder, embittered by oppression, prepared to give their life for liberty; he felt the heat, heard the whistling of bullets and the menacing tolling of church bells that are all evoked by Barbier in *La Curée*.¹¹⁹ In his memoirs Alexandre Dumas père claims to have seen the painter near the Pont d'Arcole during the fighting. According to him, Delacroix showed his fear of the insurgents until he saw the tricolour, symbolic of the Napoleonic Empire, floating above Notre-Dame; at that moment “enthusiasm replaced fear, and he glorified the people, who at first had frightened him.”¹²⁰

In the background of *Liberty Leading the People* we see the tricolour flying from Notre-Dame's south tower, a detail that may point to Delacroix's intention to immortalise 28 July. Delacroix's choice for this day can be partly explained by the fact that the transformation that was taking place in France was becoming visible and audible on 28 July, the day that was depicted in approximately half of the illustrations of the July Revolution.¹²¹ It was the day on which the heavy fighting began, barricades were erected in the streets and students hoisted the tricolour from the southern tower of Notre-Dame. The students also used the heaviest bell, *le grand bourdon “Emmanuel”* (God with us), to

¹¹⁹ “Oh! Lorsqu'un lourd soleil chauffait les grandes dalles
Des ponts et nos quais déserts,
Que les cloches hurlaient, que la grêle des balles
Sifflait et pleuvait par les airs ;
Que dans Paris entier, comme la mer qui monte,
Le peuple soulevé grondait,
Et qu'au lugubre accent des vieux canons de fonte
La Marseillaise répondait,
Certes, on ne voyait pas, comme au jour où nous sommes,
Tant d'uniformes à la fois :
C'était sous des haillons que battaient les cœurs d'hommes ;
C'était alors de sales doigts
Qui chargeaient les mousquets et renvoyaient la foudre ;
C'était la bouche aux vils jurons
Qui mâchait la cartouche, et qui, noire de poudre,
Criaient aux citoyens: Mourons!”

¹²⁰ Cited in Barthélémy Jobert, *Delacroix* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 130.

¹²¹ Jakobowicz, 1830, *Le Peuple de Paris*, 139.

sound the tocsin and the death knell of Bourbon rule. During the Restoration, this bell had been heard only on the most important Christian festive days and on great state occasions, such as royal births, marriages, coronations, and funerals. Following the students' example, insurgents began to replace the white Bourbon flag with the tricolour on practically every important building, and to tear the symbols of Bourbon rule from buildings and uniforms; in this way they signalled that an ever-growing part of Paris was in their hands.¹²²

Delacroix's choice for 28 July enabled him to depict the barricade fighters as vulnerable, confused, desperately courageous people, improvised heroes armed with broomsticks, who defend their livelihood and liberty. In *Liberty Leading the People* they are as defenceless against the government troops as Delacroix was against critics and civil servants, more hunted animal than aggressive hunter still. Pamphlets like the *Histoire impartiale et véridique de Charles X surnommé le Robin-des-Bois, par un ex-officier des chasseurs*, which I have mentioned earlier, may have influenced Delacroix's views on the emotions of the barricade fighters. The *Histoire impartiale* characterises the two last days of the July Revolution as follows: "On the 29th, the fighting starts again; but the people are no longer defending themselves [as they did on the preceding day], now they attack."¹²³ It describes the barricade fighters as men made jobless by Charles X's signing of the Four Ordinances, because workshops had closed to protest against the government's act of tyranny. 50.000 unemployed

¹²² Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 267; Mansel, *Paris Between Empires*, 242-44. Insurgents did not only hoist the tricolour on the towers of Notre-Dame, but also red and black flags on the Tuileries palace, the Hôtel de ville and the Vendôme column. Delacroix did not depict these flags; their connexions with memories of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary violence made them highly controversial in 1830. For the history of the red and black flag in France see f.i. Serge Bokobza, *Contribution à la titrologie romanesque: Variations sur le titre "Le Rouge et le Noir"* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), 89-98.

¹²³ "Le 29, le combat recommence; mais ce nest plus le peuple qui se défend, c'est lui qui attaque." *Histoire impartiale*, 85.

men had started the rebellion in a desperate attempt to win back their livelihood.¹²⁴ They were convinced that it was now impossible to come to an agreement with the government; for them it was victory or death. Armed with improvised weapons they built barricades: “...In vain expiring authority deploys impressive force against badly armed men who are in the greatest confusion...,”¹²⁵ but disorder proved to be more powerful than order. The barricade fighters became almost one being that moved spontaneously to ward off imminent danger; this movement saved their lives.¹²⁶



17 An. : L'effet du patriotisme et l'activité des citoyens de Paris pour l'avancement des travaux du Champ de Mars destinés à la fête du 14 juillet 1790. Coloured etching, 17,5 x 29,5 cm. 1790. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Delacroix's choice for the 28th may also have been based on its being a Wednesday, as had been 14 July 1790, the day of the *Fête de la Fédération*,¹²⁷ the great festival organised in Paris exactly forty years and two weeks before the July Revolution, in celebration of the first anniversary of the Storming of

¹²⁴ Ibid, 81.

¹²⁵ “...en vain l'autorité expirante déploie-t-elle des forces imposantes contre des hommes à peine armés dans la plus grande confusion...” Ibid., 83.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 84.

¹²⁷ See the official programme *Détails de la fête nationale du 14 juillet 1790, arrêtés par le roi* (Paris: Garneray, 1790), 2.

the Bastille. On this day National Guardsmen from all over France had gathered in Paris to swear a solemn religious oath of fraternity and loyalty to king, country and a Constitution that was not yet ready. They took their example from La Fayette, their commander since 15 July 1789, also a Wednesday, and Louis XVI himself. The event was meant as a demonstration of peaceful patriotism, which would hopefully neutralise the insurrectional violence of the Storming of the Bastille and teach the French the limits of their newly fought liberty. Since the festival had to be organised in only a few weeks, Parisians were invited to help with the preparation of the festival ground on the Champ de Mars. The sight of peaceful, patriotic Parisians digging and building together replaced that of the violent destruction of the Bastille (ill. 17).¹²⁸

Even when Delacroix's desperate barricade fighters are simply struggling to survive, building barricades unites them, just as did the building activities on the Champ de Mars for the Parisians of 1790. Not the presence of young, well-educated men, but the choice of Wednesday 28 July indicates that the message of *Liberty Leading the People* is essentially one of support for La Fayette and Louis-Philippe's maintenance of law and order, and for the new government that would respect the liberties granted in the Constitutional Charter.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Pascal Dupuy, Avant-propos in *La Fête de la Fédération*, edited by Pascal Dupuy (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Publications des Universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2012), 7-9.

¹²⁹ Delacroix's choice to commemorate Wednesday 14 July 1790 in *Liberty Leading the People* foreshadows the choice made by the French government in 1880 to celebrate Quatorze Juillet in commemoration of both the Storming of the Bastille, to please the republicans, and the Fête de la Fédération, to please the moderates. The days of 9 and 10 Thermidor of the year II (27 and 28 July 1794), the dates which mark Robespierre's downfall and his execution, may also have ran through Delacroix's mind. Although moderation triumphed on these last days of July 1794, 9 and 10 Thermidor carried so many negative connotations that they never seem to have been seriously considered as days of national commemoration. Christian Amalvi, "Bastille Day: From Dies Irae to Holiday," in *Symbols*, vol. 3 of *Realms of Memory*, directed by Pierre Nora, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 117-54, esp. 120-22.

During Louis-Philippe's accession on 9 August the king had sworn an oath of allegiance to the Constitutional Charter; three weeks later the Fête de la Fédération itself had been recreated. On the Champ de Mars Louis-Philippe, dressed in the uniform of the Garde nationale, had reviewed 50.000 guardsmen, including an impressed Delacroix,¹³⁰ under the command of La Fayette; the spectacle was watched by 500.000 people.

¹³⁰ Letter to Charles de Verninac, 4 September, in Delacroix, *Further Correspondence*, 18.



18 Liberty Leading the People

Liberty Leading the People: The Painting's Composition

In *Liberty Leading the People* (ill. 1 and 18) Delacroix braved artistic convention by combining highly realistic images of ugly, dirty, dishevelled and desperate barricade fighters with a powerful, sexualised allegory of Liberty who storms forward bare-breasted. He also shockingly depicted the putrefying corpses of these fighters' fallen enemies; in the sweltering July heat they lie at the insurrectionists' feet, in front of a barricade built of paving stones and torn-up planking. This pyramidal composition resembles that of an allegorical monument of victory; the corpses of the vanquished are depicted on the pedestal, below the victors. A kneeling young man who looks up at the Goddess of Liberty forms the link between the dead and the living. Some of the figures

on the edges of the painting are intentionally cut off, so that the painting resembles as much a fragment of a real-life scene as it does an allegorical monument.



19 Antoine-Jean Gros: Napoleon on the Battlefield of Eylau, 9 February 1807. Oil on canvas. 521 x 784 cm. 1808. Paris: Musée du Louvre.

The painting that counts as the most important example for the composition of *Liberty leading the People* is Gros's painting of the battlefield at Eylau on the morning after the battle, although the contrast between the sad, dark, wintry morning of *The Battlefield at Eylau* and the blue sky of *Liberty Leading the People* could not be greater. Its full title, *Napoleon on the Battlefield at Eylau: 9 February 1807* (ill. 19), is structured like that of Delacroix's painting and Charlet's *L'Allocution*.

In *The Battlefield at Eylau* French horsemen, one of them Napoleon on an otherworldly, resplendent horse, tower above realistically rendered enemy dead; one of them is a *cuirassier*, with one white-gloved hand touching the

painting's lower edge and the manes of his helmet covered in snow. One wounded enemy soldier kneels before Napoleon, gripping his leg and trying to touch the imperial eagle emblem on his saddlebag.¹³¹ In this painting too, figures on the edges are cut off. In both paintings we see a church in the right background; in *The Battlefield at Eylau* it is the tower of the village church of Eylau, which served as the French centre of command during the battle.

On two pieces of planking on the right of Liberty, *Liberty Leading the People* is signed in red paint, as if it has been signed in the artist's own blood:

Eug Delacroix

1830.



20 *Liberty Leading the People*, signature.

The red dot after 1830 seems to suggest that the ancien régime was ended not only by the bloody battle of the July Days, but also by Delacroix's own display of courage when he created this original and imaginative allegory on the newly fought liberty (ill. 20).

I fully agree with Traeger (see **The literature on *Liberty Leading the People***) that the barricade fighters do not seem to be aware of Liberty's presence. While Liberty surveys the whole scene, two of the three men depicted in the foreground to the left of Liberty look past or through her in the direction of the gamin de Paris to the right of Liberty; the third, the crouching boy in the

¹³¹ Rohlmann, "Delacroix' *Liberté*: Die Erlösung der Bilder," 227-29.

extreme left, gazes intently at the corpse in front of him. Rather than enthusiasm, aggression or bloodthirst, the faces of the three barricade fighters in the left foreground express fear, despair and loneliness. They don't even seem to be aware of each other's presence, and it is still uncertain whether the intrepid gamin de Paris who storms forward over the barricade will be able to rouse them or has even caught their attention. Instead of a group of determined fighters Delacroix has depicted loners, afraid to lose their lives on the barricades.

The fighters in the background seem to move to the right, to fight an invisible enemy. Only one old man seems to glance in the direction of the fighters in the foreground. The only clearly recognisable example of the educated youth of Paris is a polytechnicien who wears the *bicorné* belonging to his uniform. We also see a soldier who is fighting on the side of the rebels, and several other barricade fighters who are carrying hunting rifles, army rifles with bayonets, sabres, and the improvised weapons that Delacroix had seen during the July Days. They have even improvised a tricolour with a few coloured rags tied to a stick.

Three men lie dead on the pavement at the foot of the barricade; the two on the right are soldiers. The body of one of them looks as if it has been cut in half by the painting's frame; we see only his head and upper body; the legs are missing. The third dead young man, in the left foreground, wears only a shirt and one blue stocking, so that he can be either a civilian or a soldier.

The church in the right background, separated from the barricade fighters by an undefined, smoke-filled space that clouds the July sun, is Notre-Dame; on the southern tower we clearly see a tricolour, but on the other tower too, a flag seems to have been hoisted (ill. 21). The tall, many-windowed houses depicted

to the right of the cathedral, with their steep roofs and chimneys, have never stood there.¹³² They resemble houses in the poor eastern part of the city, such as the ones in the Rue Saint-Antoine (ill. 7). Between two chimneys we see a third tricolour. Both Notre-Dame and the adjoining houses emerge as ghostly appearances from the smoke of battle. Some of the clouds of smoke that surround the houses may have drifted up from the street; others are caused by shots fired from upper windows. On the pavement in front of these houses Delacroix has depicted neatly lined up French or Swiss Royal Guards; one or two have already been killed or wounded. They are preceded by two officers on foot and one on a rearing white horse. Although these troops are fired at from the houses behind them, the officers watch the barricade fighters in the foreground intently; one of them aims his rifle at these rebels, while the horse also turns his head towards the barricade.



21 Liberty Leading the People, detail.

¹³² Toussaint, “*La Liberté guidant le peuple*” de Delacroix, 51.

Above the barricade fighters and the buildings, we see a blue sky clouded with gun smoke. Liberty's naked upper body and her tricolour catch the full sunlight; the other figures remain mostly in the shadow or are only dimly visible in the smoky background. Only the white shirt of the dead man in the left foreground catches another ray of sunlight. Bright reds and blues are hardly present in the lower part of the painting. The colours of the French flag are traditional French heraldic colours that could also be seen in the uniforms of the Swiss and French Royal Guards, in the coat of arms of Paris and in the Bourbon coat of arms. They seem to have moved to the upper part of the painting, leaving the lower part, where death and defeat reign, drained of bright colours.

The Barricade Fighters

I will now describe the barricade fighters one by one. The title of each chapter will mention the animal species to which each fighter likely belonged before he began to change into a human being. In these chapters I will also begin to describe the attributes and allegorical meanings of each barricade fighter. The allegorical meanings of all the figures in the painting enrich each other; when the multiple layers of meaning of *Liberty Leading the People* unfold, we will also discover more layers of meaning in each figure. For this reason, I will sometimes return to a figure to point to features that remained unremarked and postpone the description of the Goddess of Liberty.

In the chapter **The Literature on *Liberty Leading the People*** I have already pointed to the main difference between the barricade fighters and the corpses at the foot of the barricade. The living are all wearing a hat, beret, bandana or cap, the dead are all bareheaded. The reason for this can very likely be found in a famous anti-Bourbon song taking its inspiration from a fairy tale that the French knew by heart. In *Le Marquis de Carabas*, written in 1816 by the anti-Bourbon songwriter Pierre-Jean de Béranger,¹³³ an old nobleman who has returned from exile to reclaim his possessions acts in the same way as the miller's son from Charles Perrault's *Puss in Boots*; instructed by his talking cat he poses as a nobleman, the Marquis of Carabas, and claims the farmland through which he passes as his own. The old nobleman clings stubbornly to his hunting and other, even more outrageous, privileges and refers to the common people as animal people. The refrain of this song is an order to the farmers to take off their hats: *Chapeau bas, chapeau bas, gloire au marquis de Carabas* (Hats off, glory to the Marquis of Carabas). Béranger's song shares its fairy-tale

¹³³ P[ierre] J[ean] de Béranger, *Chansons*, vol. 1 (Bruxelles: Wahlen, 1821), 208-11.

atmosphere with the caricatures that Delacroix also consulted, but in *Liberty Leading the People*, he seems to have reversed the situation that Béranger satirised in 1816. Now that they are liberating their country and themselves from Bourbon oppression, the French have already become human enough to don hats, while as a sign of their humiliation their dead enemies have lost theirs.

All the figures in the front line of barricade fighters have picked up items of clothing and weapons that may have belonged to the dead men lying on the paving in front of the barricade¹³⁴ to change into the ferocious hunters or barricade fighters of *La Curée*. Even Liberty may have simply picked up her army rifle from the paving in front of her. The barricade fighters possess human and animal traits; they are small, vulnerable animals as well as hunters. Most of them likely belong to animal species that are considered harmful or completely insignificant, and that live solitary lives: lone wolves, squirrels, moles, and lizards. *Vivre comme un lézard* or *vivre comme une taupe* are expressions that the French use for living a solitary, housebound life.

Several of the barricade fighters resemble heraldic animals on the coats of arms of important figures from French history. They seem to be possessed by the ghosts of these heroes from the past, their spiritual ancestors. By associating barricade fighters, lowly animals, with heraldry, Delacroix wrenches it from the hands of the genealogy-obsessed but cowardly nobility which he had mocked in his early caricatures (ill. 82). He also uses the symbolic language of heraldry as a French alternative for the hieroglyphic symbol language of Greek statuary that was so admired by Quatremère de Quincy.

¹³⁴ Rohlmann, "Delacroix' *Liberté*: Die Erlösung der Bilder," 236.

The city of Paris, where these animals transforming into hunters live, has become an ambiguous place. The buildings of Paris don't seem to line the streets anymore but rise above the smoke of battle. In the city centre, where the streets have been broken up and a barricade consisting of stones and planking has been built, the July sun seems to have created a habitat for animals and hunters, as if the wood of the barricades has returned to the source from which it came. Lonely hunters who seem to have emerged from the earth itself haunt this wood, still resembling small, shy, vulnerable animals who have left their refuges to venture out into the open. One crouches behind a stone, another is ready to scale up a tree, yet another is already deadly wounded. The only solidly surface-bound figures are the company of Royal Guards in the right background, and the men in the foreground who lie dead on the hot, barren pavement.



22 Liberty Leading the People, detail.

The Voltigeur (a Salamander or Lizard?)

The boy in the left of the painting (ill. 22), a gamin de Paris who crouches behind the stones of the barricade, wears the *bonnet de police* (forage cap) of the *voltigeurs* of the Garde nationale, adorned with its hunting horn emblem. This type of cap was also worn by Napoleon's soldiers and officers; his *chasseurs* already used the hunting horn emblem. The *voltigeurs* (circus acrobats) performed sharpshooting, skirmishing and scouting duties.¹³⁵ The upper part of the boy's cap is encircled by a ribbon and divided by vertical stripes; Delacroix seems to have painted it to resemble a crown. In one hand the boy holds a small, elegant sword, with the other he grips a stone. We see only the upper part of his body, the rest of it seems to be hidden behind the painting's frame; his half-open dark shirt leaves his vulnerable neck and chest visible.

¹³⁵ Toussaint, "La Liberté guidant le peuple" de Delacroix, 47.

He resembles a lithe salamander or lizard, an animal that is also painted in the foreground of the *Still Life with Lobsters* (ill. 2). Early nineteenth-century zoologists regarded these as two kinds of reptiles that greatly resembled each other.¹³⁶ His bulging round eyes and broad mouth bring a salamander or lizard's eyes and mouth to mind, the powerful claw-like hand that grips a stone looks like a lizard's foot, his formless shirt resembles an old skin that he is shedding. This lizard has just emerged from a dark hiding place and is now crouching behind a stone, trying to protect his vulnerable underside from attackers. He is only a tiny animal changing into a street urchin, but his past life as a reptile also ties him to one of France's most revered kings.

The emblem of King Francis I (1494-1547) was a crowned salamander or lizard surrounded by fire, with the device *Nutrisco Et Extinguo* (I nourish and extinguish, ill. 23). Popular belief had it that the salamander could survive in

23 The Emblem of Francis I



¹³⁶ Modern naturalists class lizards under reptiles and salamanders under amphibians. During the early nineteenth century naturalists often did not clearly distinguish between salamanders and lizards, and even if they did, they still classed both under reptiles. See f.i. the article "Herpetology" in *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, conducted by David Brewster, ... the First American edition, vol. 10 (Philadelphia: Parker, 1832), 365-406, esp. 376 and 401-02.

fire; but this animal, in contrast to the lizard, shuns heat and the midday sun. Since Francis spent the greater part of his life in the saddle, at the head of the French army, in his attempt to conquer Italy, his emblem was chosen to underline his valour but also another quality essential to the French ideal of chivalry, his generosity.¹³⁷ In 1515, at Marignano, where he shared the hardships of his men, the young king had fought one of France's greatest and bloodiest military victories, crushing the reputedly invincible Swiss infantry;¹³⁸ during the nineteenth century the Battle of Marignano was equalled with Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz.¹³⁹ After the victory, Francis showed his humility by asking the famous knight Bayard, whose epithet *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche* (knight without fear or blemish) would become proverbial, to knight him before he used his royal privilege to knight other heroes. In this way, Francis I became the first French king who was a member of the brotherhood of knights¹⁴⁰ as well as their sovereign. This *roi-chevalier* (knightly king), who combined military prowess with love of learning and the arts, and who brought important Italian artists and works of art to France, could be said to have found his match in Napoleon, while Charles X could not stand in his shadow. By depicting a Parisian street child as a salamander/lizard who changes into a human being during the barricade war, Delacroix transforms him into an allegory of good kingship. He seems to imply that Francis I's ghost and his good qualities have taken possession of this boy to help his people in its hour of need. In this allegory Louis-Philippe is flattered over his bravery as a young general at Valmy and Jemappes, but Delacroix

¹³⁷ See f.i. Adrien Pascal, *Histoire de l'armée et de tous les régiments depuis les premiers temps de la monarchie française jusqu'à nos jours*, vol. 1 (Paris: Barbier, 1848), 381.

¹³⁸ Nicolas Louis Achaintre, *Histoire généalogique et chronologique de la Maison Royale de Bourbon ...*, vol. 1 (Paris: Mansut, 1825), 272-73.

¹³⁹ Pascal, *Histoire de l'armée*, 390.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 393.

also seems to implore him to extinguish the enemies of France's dearly fought liberty and nourish equality and the arts.



24 Liberty Leading the People, details.

The Gamin de Paris (a Squirrel?)

The other boy, on the right and slightly in front of Liberty (ill. 24), storms forward over the barricade. Although Delacroix has depicted two gamins, in the literature on *Liberty Leading the People* this boy is usually called “the gamin de Paris;” I will stay with tradition. Both the boy and the goddess step on a plank; we see only the boy’s right foot and Liberty’s left foot. As a sign of his youthful exuberance the boy wears a pointed Turkish slipper that is several sizes too big for him. Doing something *en pantoufles* (in slippers) means succeeding at one’s ease. He waves two cavalry pistols; his mouth is open, teeth

showing, as if he is shouting. In the July heat he wears a large beret made of black velvet and brown fur. According to Toussaint this is a faluche, a student beret, but the faluche appeared in France only towards the end of the nineteenth century; students wore it as a sign of their political neutrality.¹⁴¹ The boy wears a Royal Guard cartridge pouch crosswise as if it were a hunting bag; it is adorned with the Bourbon coat of arms. This pouch and its shoulder belt resemble the decorations and sashes worn by the king and his courtiers in Grandville's *Chasse nationale sur les terres royales* (ill. 14), as if the gamin de Paris has picked up these decorations from the street and given them a new purpose.

A likely source of inspiration for this little daredevil is the agile squirrel with his shoulder bag in Grandville's *Grande réjouissance nationale* (ill. 12). One detail of his clothing seems to point to his former life as a squirrel. The front of his trousers is partly unbuttoned, allowing it to fall back in the form of a squirrel tail. But this part of the boy's clothing carries another meaning also. A trouser front with buttons is called *pont* (bridge) in French; because Delacroix seems to give a clear indication of its wearer's former animal state in this part of his clothing, it becomes a *pont aux ânes*, an ass's bridge. An ass's bridge is something that everybody, even a small child, knows or understands. In *Liberty Leading the People* it likely forms a clue for understanding all the figures in the foreground; if you don't see it, you're an ass.

¹⁴¹ Toussaint, "La Liberté guidant le peuple" de Delacroix, 47-48. For the place of the faluche in French student life see Brigitte Larguèze, *Masque ou miroir: Le changement d'apparence dans le bizutage, rapport final* ([Paris]: Ministère de la Culture – Direction du Patrimoine ethnologique, 1995), 57-58. Brown, *The Gamin de Paris in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture*, 31, mentions several depictions of schoolboys wearing berets that date from around 1830; in my view these berets are not, as Brown assumes, the distinctive headgear of schoolboys, but cheap versions of an item of fashion worn by men, women and children from all social classes.



25 Baronial toque of the First Empire.

The bulging shape of the boy's expensive fur-bordered beret may be based on that of the black *toque* that was depicted as part of the coats of arms of members of the Napoleonic nobility. The borders of these toques showed heraldic designs derived from the patterns of the fur garments worn by medieval nobles. The blue and white pattern of the baronial toque for instance was called counter vair;¹⁴² it was based on an alternating pattern of light and dark squirrel fur (ill. 25).¹⁴³ Instead of plumes and this heraldic border, the beret worn by the gamin de Paris has a real reddish-brown fur border, so that it does not form an overt political symbol. A street child donning an expensive, fashionable beret, that resembles the baronial toque of the Empire, encourages the new government to recompense valour and merit, as Napoleon had done, instead of old noble names.



26 Coat of arms of Nicolas Fouquet.

Squirrels can be related to Bourbon court intrigue that had ended the careers of many meritorious men. The coat of arms of Nicolas Fouquet, Louis XIV's famous *surintendant des finances* (Superintendent of Finances), shows a squirrel standing on its hind legs and Fouquet's motto "Quo non ascendet?" (What heights will he not scale? Ill. 26). The squirrel who is first to scale the mast in Grandville's *Grande*

¹⁴² Louis de Magny, *La science du blason: Accompagnée d'un armorial général des familles nobles de l'Europe* (Paris: Aubry, 1858), CLIV.

¹⁴³ Magny, *La science du blason*, XXX.

réjouissance publique (ill. 12), likely refers to this motto also. Fouquet fell from grace in 1661, when he had provoked Louis XIV's anger by building Vaux-le-Vicomte, a castle more beautiful than any of the Sun King's palaces. The downfall of Fouquet, that great protector of the arts, was to a large extent the result of the ruthless and cunning way in which his rival at court Jean-Baptiste Colbert, who hoped to take Fouquet's place, pursued him, as if Colbert really was the wily *couleuvre* (grass snake, ill. 27) on his own coat of arms. In his castle Fouquet famously demonstrated his awareness of this pursuit to all visitors, including the king, with allegorical depictions of snakes and squirrels.¹⁴⁴



27 Coat of arms of Jean-Baptiste Colbert.

¹⁴⁴ Daniel Dessert, *Colbert: ou Le serpent venimeux* (Bruxelles: Éditions Complexe, 2000), 57-74.



28 Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, detail.

The Sewer Worker (a Mole?)

The dying young man who looks up at Liberty wears labourer's clothes, black trousers with grey patches, a white shirt, blue jacket and a broad red belt (ill. 28). According to Toussaint, these betray his recent arrival in Paris from the countryside as a temporary construction worker.¹⁴⁵ I add to this that the Provence may be his homeland; here men traditionally wear a broad red woollen belt called *taiolo*. Some authors believe that his reddish-brown bandana helps to identify him as a printer,¹⁴⁶ but the traditional printer's headgear is a paper hat and not a bandana.

Blood from this young man's wounds drips on the barricade; his eyes are covered by his bandana and his face is pale and expressionless. He seems to crawl blindly and disoriented over the barricade, his hands groping the stones in front of him. He emerges from under the corpse that lies outstretched in the

¹⁴⁵ Toussaint, "*La Liberté guidant le peuple*" de Delacroix, 44, 50.

¹⁴⁶ See f. i. Bellos, "In the Mind's Eye," 15-16.

left foreground like a mole who has just come up to the surface, alarmed by the sounds of fighting and the tolling of the grand bourdon “Emmanuel.” He seems to belong already to the *royaume des taupes* (kingdom of the moles or kingdom of death), and yet his blind face with its pointed mole’s nose looks up to Liberty and the sun as if he alone is aware of Liberty’s presence.¹⁴⁷ He resembles the mole/street musician in Grandville’s *Métamorphoses du jour* who despite his blindness is aware of the presence of artists (ill. 11), but this is probably not his profession, neither is he a construction worker. He is more likely someone who works underground in a humble profession, a sewer worker for instance.

This mole may allude to Abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, born in Fréjus (Provence), who returned to France at the beginning of the July Monarchy after having lived in exile in Brussels for fifteen years. His pamphlet *Qu’est-ce que le tiers-état?* (What is the Third Estate?), published at the eve of the French Revolution, had become one of its leading manifestoes. Robespierre had called Sieyès, whom he disliked because of his secretive behaviour, the mole of the Revolution.¹⁴⁸ Although he was a priest, Sieyès asked for political power for the Third Estate, defined by him as the productive and useful citizens whose efforts sustain society. He denied the utility of the two superior estates, the First, the clergy, and the Second, the nobility, which were thought to have been ordained by God respectively to provide spiritual guidance to the people and to rule over it. Abbé Sieyès repeated the widespread belief that the members of Third Estate descended from the Gallo-Roman population of France and that its rulers descended from the Germanic tribes that had

¹⁴⁷ Traeger, “L’épiphanie de la Liberté,” 21.

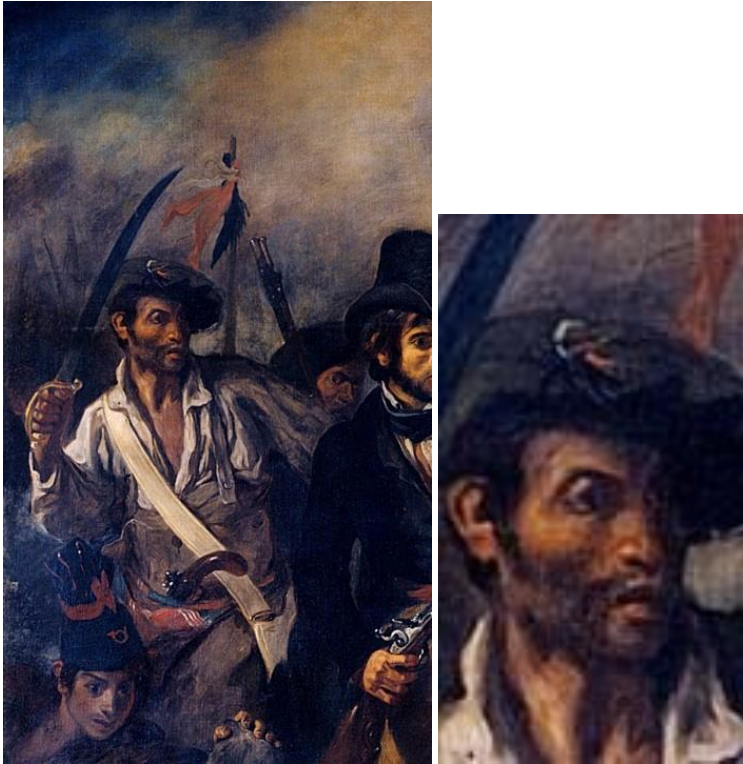
¹⁴⁸ Paul Bastid, *Sieyès et sa pensée*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Hachette, 1970), 150.

conquered France after the fall of the Roman Empire. In his view the French kings were Germanic conquerors who had reduced the Gallo-Roman population to a state of servitude and humiliation.¹⁴⁹

The notion that the Third Estate was descended from Gauls and Romans and had inherited its major traits, bravery, intelligence and lack of discipline from these peoples, was kept alive during the Restoration by liberal historians such as François Guizot and the brothers Thierry. They shared Sieyès's belief that the Third Estate was a conquered people, enslaved as an inferior race in its own country, while their Germanic oppressors owned the soil and governed the state.¹⁵⁰ When my interpretation is correct, the mole/Sieyès, dressed half in priestly and Third Estate black and half in the colours of the tricolour, who emerges from under a corpse because a bell calls his name, is appropriately depicted in *Liberty Leading the People* as the first person who is aware of the historical change wrought by the barricade fighters. These will soon be the victors in a struggle that began in 1789, inspired by Sieyès's pamphlet.

¹⁴⁹ [Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès], *Qu'est-ce que le tiers-état?* 2nd edition, corrected (n.p., 1789), 12-13.

¹⁵⁰ Marie-France Piguet, "Observation et histoire: *Race* chez Amédée Thierry et William F. Edwards," *L'homme*, no. 153, *Observer, Nommer, Classer* (January-March 2000): 93-105.



29 Liberty Leading the People, details.

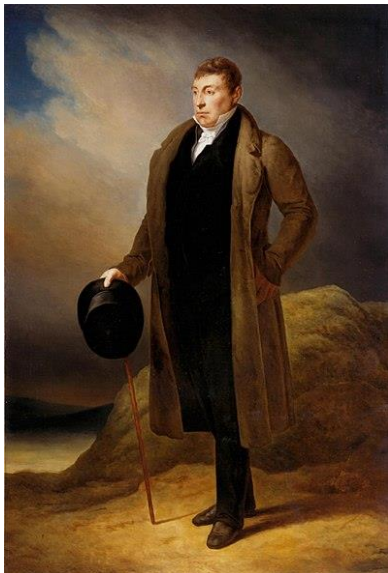
The Mason (a Beaver?)

The simple worker with his beret and apron in the left of the painting (ill. 29) has been identified by Toussaint as a factory worker and a *Vendéen*; a man who would have willingly given his life for the king during the French Revolution and again in 1815, has now knotted a piece of red ribbon (symbol of the liberals) to his white royalist *cocarde*.¹⁵¹ I think that he has actually created a tricolour echoing the improvised tricolour behind him, by pinning both a blue and a red strand of fabric to his badge. He has slung a white infantryman's sabre cross belt and he has tied a handkerchief round his hips. It is a *mouchoir de Cholet*, the rallying sign of the Vendéens, but its red, white and blue checked pattern indicates his support of the July Revolution. Toussaint correctly noted that the handkerchief is too small to really encircle his hips and support his

¹⁵¹ Toussaint, “*La Liberté guidant le peuple*” de Delacroix, 48.

pistol, but she pays no attention to the phallic look of this pistol. He brandishes a *briquet*, a type of sabre already worn by soldiers belonging to Napoleon's elite infantry regiments. The lower part of his legs is hidden by the stones of the barricade. He is the only barricade fighter whose movements and swarthy face express not only fear or childlike exuberance, but strength, and who tries to lead the fighters behind him.

I cannot agree with Toussaint's identification of this man's profession; I think that he is not a factory worker but a mason, one of the many day labourers who fought for their livelihood during the July Revolution.¹⁵² A possible real-life example for this figure is the stonemason Tessier from Nantes, the Vendean city that rallied unexpectedly to the July Revolution. Tessier, a virtuous building worker, was the epitome of the decent labourer who was eulogised in so many poetic evocations of the July Revolution. He was a man gifted with a natural authority, who during the July days had prevented a bloodbath in Nantes; for this he was honoured as a national hero.¹⁵³



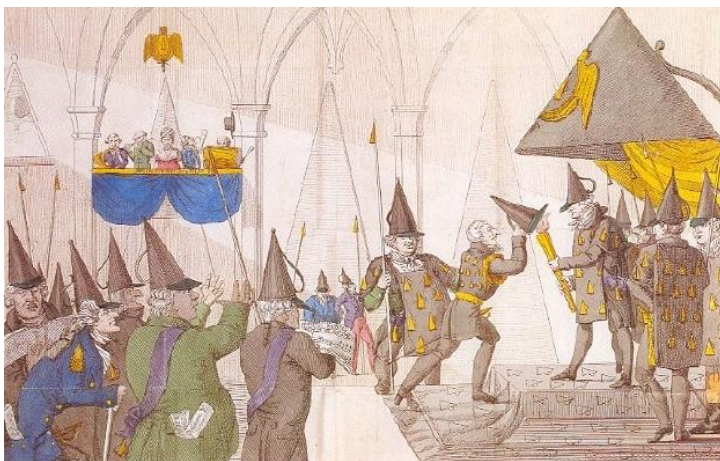
30 Ary Scheffer: Portrait of Gilbert du Motier, marquis de La Fayette. Oil on canvas. 233,7 x 157,5 cm. 1824. Washington DC: US House of Representatives.

In his former animal life this worker with his square, rugged face is likely to have been a beaver, one of the poor but happy and useful members of society whom Grandville contrasted with a courtier in *Métamorphoses du jour* (ill. 13). Both his profession and the industrious, dam- or barricade-building,

¹⁵² Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 273.

¹⁵³ Marcel Giraud-Mangin, "Nantes en 1830 et les journées de juillet," *Revue d'histoire moderne* 6 (1931): 455-68, esp. 464, 467.

social animal species to which he seems to have belonged only seconds ago link him with freemasonry. A real mason, then, represents the many freemasons who gave their life on the barricades;¹⁵⁴ he likely also represents La Fayette, Delacroix's commander-in-chief in the National Guard and France's most famous living freemason, who was portrayed, with his beaver hat in his hand, by Ary Scheffer (ill. 30). In 1824, when the general toured the United States, Scheffer presented this portrait to the US House of Representatives.¹⁵⁵ It is interesting to compare the architect or owner of the building firm of *Castor Fils* (ill. 13), depicted by Grandville, with this portrait. The simplicity of the square-faced nobleman's costume resembles that of the architect or builder in Grandville's lithograph.



31 Anonymous: Réception d'un chevalier de l'éteignoir. Coloured etching from *Le Nain jaune*. 1815. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

His briquet sabre marks the mason, and all Napoleonic soldiers who used it before him, as defenders of

enlightenment, truth, reason and progress. The hilt of this type of sabre resembles a fire striker (*briquet*). In a home-made allegory Delacroix contrasts the fire striker with the candle extinguisher, which caricaturists working

¹⁵⁴ Many freemasons and former Carbonarists, notably those belonging to the *Amis de la Vérité*, had lost their lives during the July Days. In an address of 31 July 1830 (reprinted in Lantoin, *Histoire de la franc-maçonnerie française*, 409) this lodge claimed that its membership had been decimated during the July Revolution.

¹⁵⁵ For the details of La Fayette's costume during his American tour, including his beaver hat, see f. i. A[mos] A[ndrew] Parker, *Recollections of General La Fayette on his visit to the United States in 1824 and 1825* [...] (Keene, N.H.: Sentinel, 1879), 25.

during the Restoration used in their representations of royalist enemies of enlightened ideas (ill. 31).¹⁵⁶

32 Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson: Portrait of Jacques Cathelineau. Oil on canvas. 266 x 141 cm. 1816 (Salon of 1824). Versailles: Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.



Delacroix's portrayal of a Vendéen who changes sides to embrace these ideas comments on the series of posthumous portraits, commissioned by the restored Bourbons, of generals of the Vendean uprising of 1793 (ill. 32), wearing their mouchoirs de Cholet, rosaries, and white royalist Sacred Heart badges. In Anne-Louis Girodet's portrait of blond Jacques Cathelineau we also see the pistols that he has stuck in his white sash, and the Cross and a white Bourbon flag in the background.

Cathelineau was a simple peddler whose gift for leadership equalled that of Tessier. He rose to the rank of *generalissimo* of the Royal and Catholic Army of Vendée and was mortally wounded when his troops stormed Nantes in 1793.

¹⁵⁶ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Eugène Delacroix*, 43.



33 Delacroix: *Liberty Leading the People*, detail.

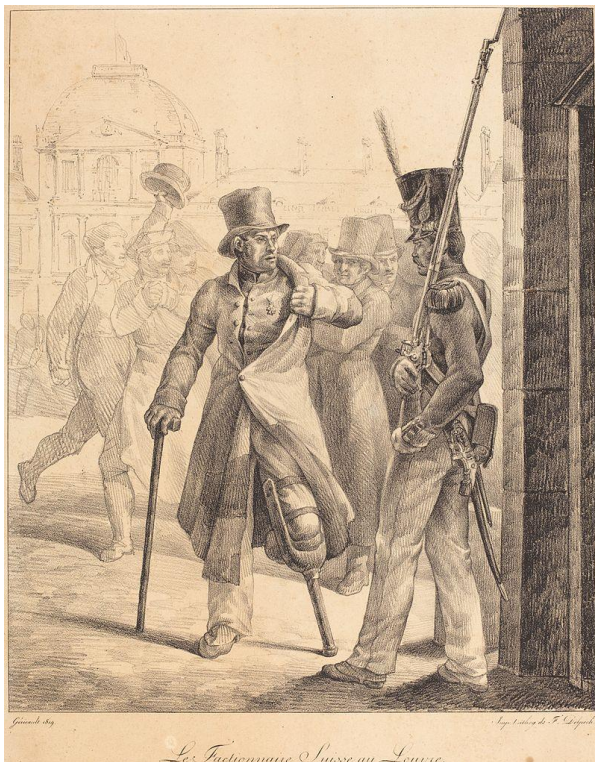
The Outcast (a Wolf?)

Immediately to the left of Liberty, a haggard and frightened man kneels on the barricade; only his right leg and foot are completely visible (ill. 33). He wears a shabby black top hat, an open-necked white shirt and loose black neckcloth, a dark coat and vest over wide, light, long worker's trousers. He is armed with an old-fashioned double-barrelled hunting rifle. Toussaint believes him to be an artisan or foreman; critics writing in 1831 saw a labourer or an equivocal being, half labourer, half bourgeois. Many stressed his depraved, criminal look.¹⁵⁷

This man may also be a down-and-out veteran of the Napoleonic wars who lost a leg in the service of his country. In a print by Géricault (1819) one of these veterans, a man who resembles him, is refused entrance to the Louvre by a

¹⁵⁷ See f. i. Hadjinicolaou, "*La Liberté guidant le peuple* de Delacroix devant son premier public," 21.

Swiss Guard (ill. 34).¹⁵⁸ His hunting rifle indicates that he may also be a student or another member of the educated classes. While the poor, the “improvised heroes,” used improvised weapons, many students who fought on the barricades brought their own hunting rifles.¹⁵⁹ Reputedly the artist Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps also used his own hunting rifle and hunting bag when he fought on the barricades, shouting: “Je chasse la grosse bête” (I am hunting big game).¹⁶⁰ Like the fighters in Barbier’s *La Curée*, Decamps was usurping the noble and royal privilege to hunt big game, with the intention of killing or driving out the Bourbons.



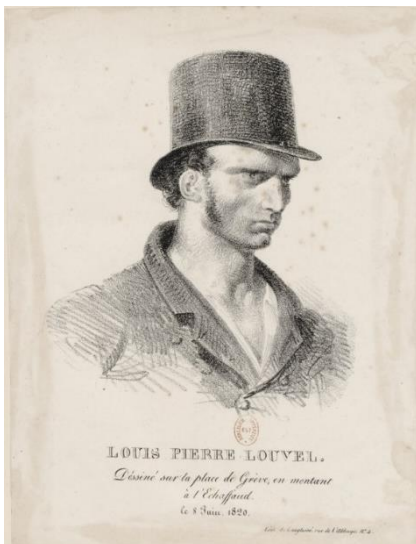
34 Théodore Géricault: Le Factionnaire suisse au Louvre. Lithograph. 39.3 x 32.7 cm. 1819. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

¹⁵⁸ Rohlmann, “Delacroix’ *Liberté*: Die Erlösung der Bilder,” 236, links both the outcast and the mason to Géricault’s lithograph; the figure immediately left of the one-legged soldier closely resembles the mason.

¹⁵⁹ Louis Blanc, *Histoire de dix ans: 1830-1840*, vol. 1 (Bruxelles: Wouters, Raspoet et Co, 1843), 137.

¹⁶⁰ Théophile Silvestre, *Histoire des artistes vivants français et étrangers: Études d’après nature, première série ...* (Paris, Blanchard, 1856), 179.

Even when this man is an artist (part intellectual, part worker) or a student, he is not the example of moral courage and restraint that we find in celebratory post-July Revolution poetry, but a social outcast whose wide-eyed gaze expresses only fear, desperation and loneliness. It makes sense to view him as a solitary wolf whose hunger has driven him out of the wood. Like the wolf in La Fontaine's fable of the wolf and the dog, he loves his freedom uncompromisingly. Although La Fontaine's wolf feels attracted to the life of the well-fed watchdog who he has met along the way, he decides to stick to his old life when he discovers the wounds that the dog's collar have made in his neck. Delacroix's wolf, with his open-necked shirt and loose neckcloth, seems to embody a strong Gallic love of liberty and a wish not to become a slavish servant of any government; passions that also seem to have inspired Delacroix's choice of Grandville's political caricatures as important sources for the figures of the barricade fighters.



35 Louis-Pierre Henriquel-Dupont: Louis Pierre Louvel dessiné sur la place de Grève, en montant à l'Echaffaud, le 8 Juin 1820. Lithograph. 1820. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The wolf may also refer to Louvel, the murderer of the duc de Berry, whose name means “wolf cub;” against regulations he wore a hat, in *Liberty Leading the People* symbolic of human dignity and liberty, on his way to his execution (ill. 35).¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ For Delacroix's interest in Louvel see Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Eugène Delacroix*, 46-57.

Lost Children

Now that I have described the barricade fighters, the animal species to which they likely belonged before their transformation, and the ideas and values which they illustrate, I will examine the ways in which they may have served as homages to the courage of the French soldiers of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.



36 P. Brut pinx., Katz sculp.: Aux armes citoyens!! Soldats Français. Etching. 19 x 16 cm. 1794. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

While they are fighting on the barricade, animals transform themselves into hunters with the help of items of military equipment that they have picked up from the street. These hunters' military appearance, but paradoxically also their desperation, loneliness and lost, forlorn look, link them to French

military glory, which was extolled in Napoleonic military propaganda. The strategies that were reputedly devised by the army veterans who fought on the barricades in July 1830, were born from a desperation comparable to that of the generals of the Revolutionary armies. These generals had had to fight for the liberty of their country with mostly inexperienced, badly trained and armed volunteers (ill. 36). The Revolutionary generals of 1792, when Louis-Philippe fought at Jemappes and Valmy, developed strategies and ruses that centred on the light infantry. These strategies undermined Prussian self-

confidence at Valmy,¹⁶² and enabled the French, who fought under the tricolour and sang the *Marseillaise*, to win at Jemappes.¹⁶³

The *grenadiers*, *tirailleurs*, *chasseurs* and *voltigeurs* of the French light infantry rose to fame during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era. These units consisted of agile, intelligent soldiers, armed with rifle and bayonet, who specialised in skirmishes and surprise attacks, scouting and vanguard duties, relying on their own experience and judgement. In his book about the history and strategy of light infantry warfare, published in 1806, the Napoleonic light infantry general Guillaume-Philibert Duhesme stated: “They are the *velites* of the Roman armies, uniting the cock’s boldness with the bird’s lightness, the eagle’s piercing eye with the speed of Jupiter’s arrow; i.e. [they are] the French armed with rifle and bayonet, fighting as lost children ahead of the army with only their courage to rely on.”¹⁶⁴ The Saint-Simonists’ concept of an artistic vanguard was derived from the important role of these elite soldiers in Napoleonic military propaganda. Inspired by this concept, Delacroix may have regarded himself as a lonely, brave, intelligent vanguard fighter who aimed directly at the heart and the imagination.

During the sixteenth century *enfants perdus* (lost children) became the French army’s epithet for light infantry vanguard soldiers; these had already played an important part in Francis I’s Battle of Marignano, the battle that was

¹⁶² At the end of the battle, following the example set by General Kellermann, the French managed to frighten off the advancing Prussian troops by shouting cries of victory and waving their bayonets with their hats fixed on top of them. Abel Hugo, *France militaire: Histoire des armées françaises de terre et de mer de 1792 à 1833*, vol. 1 (Paris: Delloye, 1833), 6-7.

¹⁶³ [Guillaume-Philibert Duhesme], *Précis historique de l’infanterie légère, de ses fonctions, et de son influence dans la tactique des différens siècles* (Lyon: n.p., 1806), 148-49.

¹⁶⁴ “Ce sont des vélites des armées romaines, réunissant l’audace du coq à la légèreté de l’oiseau, l’oeil perçant de l’aigle à la rapidité du trait de Jupiter; ou des Français armés d’un fusil à baïonnette, combattant en enfans perdus, et livrés à leur courage en avant de l’armée.” Duhesme, *Précis historique de l’infanterie légère*, 253.

equalled only by the Battle of Austerlitz.¹⁶⁵ The name *enfants perdus* refers to both the danger and the independence of their duties.¹⁶⁶ Duhesme held that the intelligence and spirit needed to perform *enfants perdus* duties were qualities in which the French excelled.¹⁶⁷ His opinion on the qualities of French soldiers and the French descendants of the Gallo-Roman population in general, repeats French official propaganda of the Revolutionary years. Unable to provide their soldiers with proper training, uniforms, shoes, provisions and rifles, the French ordered soldiers to charge the enemy armed only with bayonets or pikes. Hand-to-hand fighting with *l'arme blanche*, sabres, bayonets and pikes, was extolled as a Gallic, patriotic form of combat that suited the undisciplined, fiery and impetuous character of the French volunteer soldier best.¹⁶⁸

37 Théodore Géricault: Charging Officer of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval of the Imperial Guard. Oil on canvas. 349 x 266 cm. Salon of 1812. Paris: Musée du Louvre.



¹⁶⁵ Pascal, *Histoire de l'armée*, 390.

¹⁶⁶ François Sicard, *Histoire des Institutions militaires des français ...*, vol. 1 (Paris: Corréard, 1831), 377.

¹⁶⁷ Duhesme, *Précis historique de l'infanterie légère*, 152, 248, 253.

¹⁶⁸ Alan Forrest, "The Logistics of Revolutionary War in France," in *War in an Age of Revolution: 1775-1815*, edited by Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 177-96, esp. 192-93.

During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era, the importance of the *chasseurs-à-cheval* (mounted chasseurs, light cavalry) equalled that of the *enfants perdus*; riding their famous sturdy Ardennes horses, they too performed dangerous and independent duties, ranging from scouting to raiding and knee-to-knee charges.¹⁶⁹ Their individualistic, agile, close-combat prowess was immortalised by Géricault in his *Charging Officer of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval of the Imperial Guard* of 1812 (ill. 37), in Louis-Philippe's collection, which shows an officer on a rearing, independent-minded white horse; without noticing the other horsemen fighting near him, he turns in the saddle, gripping his sabre with his right hand, to ward off a danger that lurks behind him.

Napoleon himself was believed to have demonstrated the audacity of the French Revolutionary soldier when, waving the tricolour, he stormed the bridge of Arcole in 1796, at the head of a company of grenadiers.¹⁷⁰ He paid homage to the valour of the light infantry and cavalry by preferring to appear in public dressed either in the blue colonel's uniform of the grenadiers of the Imperial Guard or the green ditto of the chasseurs-à-cheval; he was buried dressed in chasseurs uniform.¹⁷¹

The *ex-officier des chasseurs* who wrote the *Histoire impartiale et véridique de Charles X surnommé le Robin-des-Bois* had chosen a pen name that immediately brought the intelligence and valour of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic soldier to mind, qualities that stood in bitter contrast to Charles X's alleged stupidity, cruelty and cowardice.

¹⁶⁹ John R. Elting, *Swords Around a Throne: Napoleon's Grande Armée* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 238-39.

¹⁷⁰ Traeger, "L'épiphanie de la Liberté," 13.

¹⁷¹ Colombe Samoyault-Verlet, "The Emperor's Wardrobe," in *The Age of Napoleon: Costume from Revolution to Empire, 1789-1815*, edited by Katell Le Bourhis (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Abrams, 1989), 203-15, esp. 204.

In 1831, Delacroix's barricade fighters may have reminded the Salon public of *enfants perdus*, *voltigeurs* and *chasseurs*; they fight alone, hardly noticing each other. These desperate latter-day versions of the light infantry fighters of 1792, equipped with whatever they can lay their hands on, bring glorious victories to the French people. The loyalty of these Parisian barricade fighters to their new king is implied by their resemblance to the soldiers whom he commanded in 1792. Their courage recalls that shown by Louis-Philippe himself, when he rode unprotected through the barricaded streets of Paris to face La Fayette in the *Hôtel de Ville*.

Lost Souls: The Delacroix Family

The barricade fighters, who are transforming from lonely animals into hunters, can be associated with a plethora of things: the chasseurs and other elite soldiers of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic army, the countryside and the woods, fairy tales and fables, chivalric heroes from French history, the Third Estate and freemasonry, but also with the fate of those who opposed the Bourbons. In this chapter I will examine how these animals and victims, who change into hunters, soldiers and knights, are also connected to the history of the Delacroix family and its homeland, the Argonne forest, and with Delacroix's attempts, during the fall of 1830, to help a particular family member to a new career.

Delacroix may have regarded certain aspects of his family history as illustrative of the fate of the French people which had lost its dearly fought liberty during the Restoration. In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix, then, visualises the sad history of his own patriotic family, which was rooted in the area where the battles at Jemappes and Valmy had been fought. Its members had been prepared to give their lives for France during the Revolution and the Napoleonic era, but at the beginning of the Bourbon Restoration they had fallen from favour. Poverty, lack of career perspective, a death sentence, banishment and a case of insanity now put their mark on the family. During this period some of Delacroix's relatives had lived banished from Paris as if they were living dead, damned souls in hell, or animals in their hiding place.

Because he had no money of his own, at the beginning of his career, Eugène Delacroix was highly dependent on support from the Bourbon government.¹⁷²

¹⁷² For the history of the financial ruin of the Delacroix family see André Joubin, "Documents nouveaux sur Delacroix et sa famille," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 6th series, vol.9 (March 1933): 173-86.

He was handicapped by his own Bonapartism and by the fact that his father, the civil servant and politician Charles-François Delacroix (1741-1805) was, just like Louis-Philippe's father, a *régicide* (a man who in 1793 had voted for the execution of Louis XVI). During the Revolution and the Napoleonic era, his father had resumed a promising career that had ended prematurely during the ancien régime. He had been the collaborator and disciple of Controller-General Turgot, the great financial and agricultural reformer, but his career was cut short by Turgot's fall from royal favour in 1776.¹⁷³ For this reason both Turgot and Charles Delacroix can be seen as victims of Bourbon court intrigue; they were ambitious men whose fate resembled that of Fouquet, who looked on himself as a hunted squirrel.

After Turgot's downfall, Charles Delacroix returned to his birthplace Givry-en-Argonne (Département Marne) at the edge of the Fôret d'Argonne, only fifteen kilometres south of the Valmy - Sainte-Ménéhould area where years later the Battle of Valmy would be fought.¹⁷⁴ The Fôret d'Argonne is a narrow stretch of wood in the French Ardennes that played a strategic role in the Revolutionary Wars, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and both World Wars, because of its near-impenetrability for troops. In 1792 the French supreme commander Dumouriez had called it the French Thermopylae; when he managed to be there earlier than the enemy armies he could, like the Spartans at Thermopylae, block the few passable roads with tree trunks.¹⁷⁵ This strategy foreshadowed that of the insurgents during the July Days; as Dumouriez's

¹⁷³ See f.i. Aymé Camelin, "Faut-il remettre en cause la naissance d'Eugène Delacroix?" *Histoire des sciences médicales* 12, no. 2 (1978): 145-52, esp. 146.

¹⁷⁴ In 1830 Eugène Delacroix had never visited the Argonne region. In his diary entry for 8 October 1856 Delacroix describes his first visit to Givry-en-Argonne and the adjoining communities that were tied to the history of his family, and the emotions and memories that this visit awakened. Eugène Delacroix, *Journal*, vol. 1 1822-1857, edited by Michèle Hannoosh (Paris: Corti, 2009), 1038.

¹⁷⁵ François-Emmanuel Toulangeon, *Histoire de France depuis la Révolution de 1789 ...*, vol. 1 (Paris: Didot, an IX [1801]), 299-302.

words imply, it also resembled that of the small Spartan army, prepared to die to the last man to safeguard Greece's liberty against an overwhelming Persian majority, at the Pass of Thermopylae in 480 BC.

Charles Delacroix was too old to enlist in the patriotic volunteer army that fought at Valmy, but he was chosen to represent the Marne in the National Convention at the beginning of September 1792. He shared this honour with Jean-Baptiste Drouet, the postmaster of Sainte-Ménéhould who had recognised Louis XVI on his flight to nearby Varennes-en-Argonne in June 1791. Charles Delacroix's election was the reward for his assistance in organising the defence against the impending allied invasion of the Marne region.¹⁷⁶ He had paid for the equipment of a half-battalion and had organised a large influx of volunteers from this region into the French army that was camped in the Argonne.¹⁷⁷ Although Eugène Delacroix was born too late, and his two older brothers were too young to fight in 1792, the Delacroix family had indeed been involved in the heroic, Spartan, self-sacrificing defence of French soil by a people's army that counted Louis-Philippe among its volunteers, in their wooded homeland of the Argonne.

During the Napoleonic era, when Eugène Delacroix was still a schoolboy, his two older brothers had chosen to serve in Napoleon's elite light cavalry. One of them, Henri, was killed in battle at the age of 20, when he was fighting as a *chasseur-à-cheval* in the Battle of Friedland of 14 June 1807, where the French gained a decisive victory over the Russian army. His death certificate was drawn up on 30 June 1807, so that his body may have laid unburied for over

¹⁷⁶ Gustave Laurent, "La représentation du Département de la Marne à la Convention Nationale," *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 20 (November-December 1948): 322-56.

¹⁷⁷ Eugène de Mirecourt, *Les Contemporains: Delacroix* (Paris: Havard, 1856), 24.



two weeks.¹⁷⁸ Eugène's oldest brother Charles-Henry, worshipped as a hero by the painter, enlisted in the French Revolutionary navy as a volunteer at the age of fourteen. Later he served as an officer in the chasseurs-à-cheval of the Consular and Imperial Guard.

38 Henri-François Riesener: M. Delacroix, capitaine des chasseurs-à-cheval de la Garde des consuls. Oil on canvas. 143,5 x 110,5 cm. Salon of 1804. Private Collection.

In 1804 he was portrayed in the uniform that is also worn

by the officer in Géricault's painting *Charging Officer of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval of the Imperial Guard* (ill. 38, 37). In 1805 he was nominated aide-de-camp to Eugène de Beauharnais, the viceroy of Italy. In Italy he rose to the rank of commanding colonel of the 9th Regiment chasseurs-à-cheval; he was shot in his right thigh and made prisoner of war during the Russian campaign of 1812. At the return of the Bourbons, when he was not yet forty, he retired from the army after having been promoted to the rank of general and honorary field

¹⁷⁸ In the digitised Régistre des baptêmes, mariages, sépultures de Contault-le-Maupas 1719-1791 (*Archives départementales de la Marne*, cote E dépôt 9554*, consulted 1 February 2017) his name is given as Anne Antoine Claude Henry Delacroix, born 12 June 1787, baptised 21 June 1787. The information concerning Henri's military career and his death comes from the copy of his death certificate in the digitised Régistre des décès de Contault-le-Maupas An X-1870 (*Archives départementales de la Marne*, cote 2 E 187/6*, consulted 1 February 2017).

marshal. His fate was a war invalid's life of inactivity in the countryside far from Paris.¹⁷⁹

Charles-Henry Delacroix took part in several audacious cavalry charges of the Napoleonic era, the actions that were immortalised in Géricault's *Charging Officer of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval of the Imperial Guard*. The most famous of these charges were that of Marengo in 1800, that of Raab in 1809, and the great, desperate cavalry charge that saved the French from defeat at Eylau in February 1807. The charge of Eylau was regarded by the French as an act of Spartan self-sacrifice in which many French soldiers gave their lives for their country. Here, the French cavalry broke through the Russian lines and then, at the cost of many casualties, unexpectedly turned back in a single column to break through the Russian lines a second time. In Napoleon's words, at Eylau the chasseurs of the Imperial Guard "covered themselves with glory."¹⁸⁰ A biography of Eugène de Beauharnais by his secretary Antoine Darnay, published in 1830, reveals that Charles-Henry was at Eylau because Prince Eugène had sent him on a special mission to Napoleon. Darnay lauds him for bravely joining the ranks of the chasseurs of the Guard as a volunteer.¹⁸¹

In Darnay's account of the fight at San Michele which took place during Prince Eugène's campaign of 1809 against the Austrian army, Charles-Henry is again praised as a young and impetuous officer who charged the enemy in the streets

¹⁷⁹ For Charles-Henry's biography and Delacroix's relationship with his brother see Jean-Luc Stéphant, "Chili: ou le frère oublié d'Eugène Delacroix, documents inédits," *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français* 1990 (1991): 173-205.

¹⁸⁰ Letter of Napoleon to Prince Eugène, written in Eylau on 14 February 1807, cited in Carola Oman, *Napoleon's Viceroy: Eugène de Beauharnais* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966), 229. The phrase "covered themselves with glory" in this "brilliant and unheard of" charge was also used in the official army bulletins that the nine year old schoolboy Eugène Delacroix read and heard being read in Paris. *Bataille de Preussisch-Eylau, gagnée par la Grande Armée, commandée en personne par S.M. Napoleon Ier [...] sur les armées combinées de Prusse et de Russie, le 8 février 1807* (Paris: n.p., 1807), 7-8.

¹⁸¹ Baron [Antoine] Darnay, *Notices historiques sur Son Altesse Royale le Prince Eugène, vice-roi d'Italie, duc de Leuchtenberg, prince d'Eichstadt* (Paris: David, 1830), 54.

of San Michele, searching for danger and exposing himself to it.¹⁸² On 15 August 1809, Napoleon's fortieth birthday, Charles-Henry was made a Baron of the Empire, with a coat of arms showing the toque with checked squirrel fur border, designed for Napoleon's barons, in recognition of his bravery during this campaign.¹⁸³

Delacroix's admiration for his brother's desperate bravery at Eylau and in other battles seems never to have waned. In a report for the City Council of Paris concerning Colonel Jean-Charles Langlois's panoramas of famous French battles, written in 1858, he reserved his highest praise for Langlois's depiction of the charge of the chasseurs at Eylau, "from which only a few men returned."¹⁸⁴ In Charles-Henry's epitaph, Eugène extols his brother's bravery as an example of the chivalric ideal of Francis I's time that had been brought to life again in Napoleonic propaganda. The text pays tribute to Charles-Henry's brilliant valour and noble and chivalrous character and commemorates that he was the friend and companion of Eugène [de Beauharnais], the modern Bayard.¹⁸⁵

Prince Eugène (1781-1824), viceroy and light cavalry general, was revered until long after his death as the most noble and chivalrous of soldiers. He shared his flattering epithet with several French marshals of the Napoleonic era, such as Bessières, Oudinot and Poniatowski. Its origin can be traced to

¹⁸² "...cherchait les dangers et s'y exposa, ce jour là..." Darnay, *Notices historiques sur Son Altesse Royale le Prince Eugène*, 100. Praise of Charles-Henry's bravery on this occasion had already started in the army bulletin on the fight at San-Michele. See *Bulletins officiels de la Grande Armée: Campagnes de Prusse, de Pologne et d'Autriche*, edited by Alexandre Goujon (Paris: Baudoin, 1821), 22.

¹⁸³ Oman, *Napoleon's Viceroy*, 273.

¹⁸⁴ "...dont il ne revint que quelques hommes." Diary entry for Wednesday 14 April 1858. Eugène Delacroix, *Journal*, vol. 2 1858-1863, edited by Michèle Hannoosh (Paris: Corti, 2009), 1234-35.

¹⁸⁵ Jean-Luc Stéphan, "Chili," 205. Prince Eugène's epithet "Modern Bayard" was mentioned in a popular biography of the prince that was first published in 1821 and reprinted several times during the Restoration and after: L.R., *Vie civile, politique et militaire d'Eugène de Beauharnais [...] depuis ses premières campagnes jusqu'au 1814*, vol. 1 (Paris: Callot, 1830), VI.

Napoleon's conquest of Italy, which could be compared with the campaigns of Francis I and Bayard. Bayard's chivalry and that of his king appealed to the new Napoleonic nobility of merit and the members of the Légion d'honneur: merit, virtue and valour were the qualities of the simple knight who had had the honour of knighting a king.¹⁸⁶

Although they belong to the downtrodden bestial people, the two street urchins, the salamander/lizard and the squirrel, are the embodiments of both this chivalric ideal and the valour of the French light infantry and cavalry. The gamin de Paris on the right of Liberty, with his cavalry pistols and his beret reminiscent of a baronial toque, summarises the military career of Charles-Henry Delacroix from boyhood until his elevation to the rank of Baron of the Empire. Since the gamin de Paris bears no physical resemblance to Charles-Henry, he represents a whole class of Revolutionary and Napoleonic officers without a noble background who, like the two child martyrs Bara and Viala, started their military career as volunteers when they were still children. They either died young or rose through the ranks because of their talent and courage. The boy on the left, with his voltigeur's cap, also represents this new type of patriotic child soldier, a volunteer of the Garde nationale, the military role chosen by Eugène Delacroix for himself.

In *Liberty Leading the People* the outcast or wolf, the man dressed in black who carries his old hunting rifle, may represent several social types, one of them the impoverished war invalid, a class of men to which Charles-Henry belonged after his retirement from the army. He may also be a poor artist or student,

¹⁸⁶ D[ana] A[lan] Kress, *The Orlando Legend in Nineteenth-Century French Literature* (New York: Lang, 1996), 7-8. See f.i. Henry de Riancey, *Le général comte de Coutard: Étude historique sur la République, l'Empire et la Restauration* (Paris: Dentu, 1857), 36, for the prominent place taken by Bayard's helmet and the shield of Francis I in the ceremony of the distribution of the crosses of the Légion d'honneur by Napoleon in the Camp de Boulogne on 16 August 1804.

expressing the marginal position of both the oldest and the youngest of the Delacroix brothers during the Restoration. Both men hoped that they could still make a career for themselves now that the Bourbons were gone.

Delacroix's preoccupation with the job hunt of 1830, which influenced his choice of *La Curée* as a source for *Liberty Leading the People*, does not only reflect his misgivings about its consequences for his own career. Frustration over the looming failure of his attempts to help his brother to a job may have come into play too. Since he, in contrast to Charles-Henry, lived in Paris, Delacroix did not only have to defend his own interests there but also those of his brother. In the autumn of 1830, he was using his Parisian network to help Charles-Henry, the experienced soldier who had been a social outcast during the Restoration, to a new military command.

Charles-Henry came out of his retirement immediately after the July Revolution to become a member of the provisional municipal council of Tours, where he then lived. He stood candidate for the post of commander of the Garde nationale of Tours, but his permanent invalidity forced him to refuse it. He travelled to Paris late in August 1830 to apply for another job, that of military commander of Maubeuge, near the border with Belgium where in the wake of the July Revolution a rebellion against Dutch rule had broken out.

Delacroix's interest in the composition of Gros's *Battlefield at Eylau* in *Liberty Leading the People* may have been inspired by the visit of the former *chasseur-à-cheval* to Paris. The only letter in Charles-Henry's military file in which he enlarges on his bravery at Eylau, where his horse was killed under him when he charged at the head of the chasseurs, and on his brother's death at Friedland, is related to his job search of 1830. It is an undated record of service written in his own hand (during his stay in Paris?), to be attached to his

application letter; this had already been received by the War Department, apparently without a record of service, on 14 August 1830, before Charles-Henry left Tours.¹⁸⁷ When the two Delacroix brothers met in Paris in August 1830, Charles-Henry may momentarily have looked a changed man, proud to talk openly of his military past, of Eylau and his other battles, sharing his memories of these and of their dead relatives with his youngest brother; in his turn, Eugène could talk about his experiences during the July Revolution. Charles-Henry may also have commented on the incompetence displayed by the Bourbon military authorities during the July Days.

A mistress of Eugène started to lobby for Charles-Henry in October; this fact is mentioned in Eugène's letter to his brother of 13 October in which he compares his painting for his country with his brother's military victories. In this letter he demonstrates his ingrained "military spirit," anti-radicalism, and trust in benevolent men of authority such as his brother. He hopes to see Charles-Henry "leading his beloved *administrés* like a true father"¹⁸⁸ once he has taken up his command, and expects that, given the situation in Belgium, his brother may well have some fighting ahead of him. On 4 October Belgium had finally declared itself independent. The French government feared a military intervention by the nations that had supported both the Bourbons and the Dutch domination of Belgium, because this would force France to defend the new Belgian state. When France would be drawn into war it would

¹⁸⁷ "...il eut son cheval tué à la Bataille d'Eylau en chargeant à la Tête du Régiment des chasseurs de la Garde impériale [...] il a Perdu un frère tué à la bataille de Friedland." The application letter itself is missing from Charles-Henry's file, but his covering letter for the record of service summarises it and mentions 14 August as the date on which it was filed by the War Department. The file is kept in the archives of the Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes, cote 8YD2024. I thank Patrick Effiboley for his kind help with retrieving the file.

¹⁸⁸ "gouverner en vrai père ses chers administrés." Delacroix, *Lettres intimes*, 192.

again have to fight off an invasion by foreign powers from the North, as it had done in 1792 and had tried to do unsuccessfully in 1815.

When exactly the attempt to help Charles-Henry to a new command failed is unknown; his military file does not contain an answer to his application letter. His application must have been on Eugène's mind during most of the autumn of 1830, when he worked on *Liberty Leading the People*. The reason for its failure seems to have been that the commander whose place Charles-Henry wished to take, a man who had served the Bourbons as loyally as he had served Napoleon, was kept in the saddle by Talleyrand, whom the French government could not afford to thwart. As French ambassador in London he was working hard to prevent a military intervention in Belgium.¹⁸⁹ Charles-Henry had obviously applied for the wrong job, but even a revolution couldn't transform a war invalid in his fifties into a dashing young cavalry officer.

¹⁸⁹ For the details of Charles-Henry's job hunt see Stéphant, "Chili," 185-86. For Talleyrand's diplomatic activities during October 1830 see Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830*, 308-10.

Liberty (a Horse?)

I have started my description of the figures in *Liberty Leading the People* with the barricade fighters, and I placed them within the cultural frame of reference that Delacroix shared with other Frenchmen. Animals and the hunt, the battles fought in woodland areas that resemble the barricade fight of July 1830, Gallic individualism, intelligence, bravery and love of liberty that inspired the combat styles of the *enfants perdus* and *chasseurs-à-cheval*, heroes from the past who appear in modern France, the bravery and chivalry of Napoleon's soldiers and their sadness and humiliation during the Restoration, when they were like living dead or animals in their hiding places: these are all ideas that fit within this shared frame of reference. Even the history of Delacroix's family, known in detail to only a few insiders, could be generalised and allegorised by him because it had so much in common with the histories of other families that had sided with the French Revolution and Napoleon.

The Goddess of Liberty and her savage hunting party are images that Delacroix borrowed from the poem *La Curée*, where Barbier revives the allegorical female personifications of Liberty that were so popular during the French Revolution. I will examine the relationship of Delacroix's Goddess of Liberty to these revolutionary images in a later chapter: **Psalm 91 and Waterloo**. In the **Introduction** I have already pointed to Delacroix's dislike of stock allegorical figures with only one clearly defined meaning. I have postponed my description and interpretation of the Goddess of Liberty until now so as to be able to explain how Delacroix made Barbier's earthy Liberty his own and transformed her into a multifaceted, constantly shape-shifting hunting goddess whose presence fits within the shared frame of reference on which Delacroix relied, and who contrasts with religious images created to serve the interests of the Bourbons.



39 Delacroix: Liberty Leading the People, detail.

The Goddess of Liberty (ill. 39) who is so little noticed by the barricade fighters, is dressed in a garment of a dirty yellowish colour that leaves her right shoulder and breasts bare and that is held together by a piece of reddish fabric. Her face is shown in full profile, like a face on a Classical medal. She wears a Phrygian cap; the earring in her left ear is reminiscent of the earrings worn by Napoleon's soldiers. She steps up the barricade with her left foot, the only one that is shown. *Être sur le pied gauche*, left foot forward, means being ready to go into battle. Her dress clings to her left leg, but the part of her right leg below the thigh is completely invisible behind the folds of her dress; it might as well not be there. In her left hand she holds a rifle and bayonet, the weapon of the

French Revolutionary soldier. It is the *Model 1816* that was still used in 1830.¹⁹⁰

40 Antoine-Jean Gros: *Le général Bonaparte au pont d'Arcole, 17 novembre 1796*. Oil on canvas. 130 x 94 cm. Salon of 1801. Versailles: Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.



In her raised right hand she brandishes a tricolour that flows behind her, an image strongly reminiscent of Gros's portrait of Napoleon crossing the bridge of Arcole (ill. 40), but also of Joan of Arc with her banner. In both paintings the top of the flag and the finial disappear behind the frame. By following Gros's example Delacroix avoided the choice between three blatant political symbols, the Napoleonic eagle, the July Monarchy's Gallic cockerel and the Bourbon *fleur-de-lys* (lily).

Liberty's bayonet can be interpreted as a modern version of the sharp arrows and pikes of warriors and hunters from Antiquity; as Marina Warner has suggested, she is a goddess of war and of the hunt. Her Phrygian cap was conflated during the French Revolution with the *pileus*, the cap of emancipated Roman slaves.¹⁹¹ For this reason, she can be associated with the hunting goddess Diana. In ancient Rome Diana was the patroness of slaves and plebeians; she was worshipped there in her sanctuary on the Aventine and in the sacred wood of Aricia.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Toussaint, "*La Liberté guidant le peuple*" de Delacroix, 49.

¹⁹¹ Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*, 276.

¹⁹² Delacroix's choice to depict the only female figure in his painting as both Liberty and Diana may have been partly inspired by an article published in the *Revue de Paris* in 1829, the journal to which he contributed several articles during the period immediately preceding the July Revolution. In "Essai de

Just like the barricade fighters, the hunting goddess Diana, or Artemis, has a connexion with the Delacroix family and their place of origin, the Argonne. Eugène Delacroix's only sister Henriette was born in Givry-en-Argonne in 1782, during his father's period of exile from Paris.¹⁹³ In her youth Henriette was admired for her sensitivity, charm and majestic beauty;¹⁹⁴ after her death in 1827, Delacroix inherited her marble portrait bust by Joseph Chinard (Salon of 1808) that had been commissioned by her husband Raymond de Verninac.



41 Joseph Chinard: Madame de Verninac sous les attributs de Diane chasserresse préparant ses traits. Marble. 85 x 56 x 32 cm. Salon of 1808. Paris: Musée du Louvre.

Henriette, dressed in Classical draperies and bare-breasted, is portrayed as *Diana the Huntress Testing her Arrows* (ill. 41); she holds an arrow that she tests for sharpness. The style of the portrait conforms to the fashionable Neo-Classicism that was still protected by the Bourbons during the Restoration, and at first sight its subject seems to demonstrate an equally conventional interest in Classical mythology. In post-Revolutionary France, the portrait bust of Henriette de Verninac as Diana was likely intended as a learned and patriotic reference to her birth in the Ardennes region, where the

palingénésie sociale; IIIe fragment,” *Revue de Paris* no. 6 (1829), 79-98, Pierre-Simon Ballanche describes the important role of the cult of Diana on the Aventine and in Aricia during a revolt of plebeians in 6th century BC Rome. See also Carin M.C. Green, *Roman Religion and the Cult of Diana at Aricia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁹³ Régistre des baptêmes, mariages, sépultures de Givry-en-Argonne 1737-1792 (*Archives départementales de la Marne*, cote 2 E 306/1*, consulted 1 February 2017).

¹⁹⁴ See f.i. the rapturous tribute to her beauty, charm, sensitivity, melodious voice and expressive eyes in Jean-Baptiste Dumas, *Éloge historique de Raymond Verninac, Préfet du Département du Rhone, prononcé, le 29 Mai 1826, dans la séance publique de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Lyon* (Lyon: Barret, 1826), 11.

liberty of France and its enslaved Gallic people had been defended in 1792. The bust, then, depicts her as a Gallic hunting goddess who became part of the Roman pantheon. Around 1800, the best-known study on Gallic religion, which greatly influenced books on the Gauls written for the broader public, was *La Religion des Gaulois* (1727) by Jacques Martin, a learned Benedictine monk who belonged to the Maurist congregation.¹⁹⁵ Martin tells us that the favourite pastime of the Gauls was hunting in their woods. They had deified the vast forest of the Ardennes (Arduenna), the largest wood in their territory, by naming it after their goddess Ardoina or Arduina. After the Roman conquest this goddess was identified with the Roman goddess Diana.¹⁹⁶

The bare-breasted, suntanned figure of Liberty in *Liberty Leading the People* possesses the sensuousness that is lacking in Chinard's bust, as if earthy French beauty has been liberated from the prison of official Neo-Classicism and fashionable ladylike paleness. Interestingly, in a letter to his good friend Jean-Baptiste Pierret, dated 18 August 1822, Delacroix referred to the suntanned, muscled beauty of Lisette, a servant girl in his brother's country home in Le Louroux (Touraine), as that of a huntress from Antiquity (*chasseresse antique*); it made a pleasant contrast to the paleness of the Parisian beauties.¹⁹⁷ Artemis/Diana/Arduina, a goddess who roamed the sacred woods of Greece and Italy as well as those of Northern France, whose bared breasts and association with wild forests and animals make her the ultimate symbol of liberty and

¹⁹⁵ The Maurists specialised in historical studies, text editions and lives of the saints. Many of their books had lasting influence, and the importance of the Maurist's activities was such that after the dispersion of the order during the French Revolution the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres and the École des chartes continued its work. For a short history of the Maurists and their importance see M[ichael] D[avid] Knowles, "Presidential Address: Great Historical Enterprises II, The Maurists," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 9 (1959): 169-87.

¹⁹⁶ Dom Jacques Martin, *La religion des Gaulois tirée des plus pures sources de l'antiquité...*, vol. 2, book 4 (Paris: Saugrain, 1727), 43-46.

¹⁹⁷ Delacroix, *Correspondance générale*, vol. 1, 144.

naturalness,¹⁹⁸ appears suddenly on or from the stones and wood of the barricades that were erected in the streets of the Paris of 1830. She is the personification of the Gauls' right to own their woods and hunt in them, in defiance of royal and noble hunting privileges.

The goddess Diana can easily be associated with several animal species and with the very idea of transformation, as Delacroix may have known already when he was still in school. François Noël's *Dictionnaire de la fable* of 1801, a school dictionary, explains that Diana was venerated under three different names, Diana on earth, the Moon in heaven and Hecate or Proserpina in hell, and that for this reason poets gave her three heads, the first a horse's head, the second that of a woman or a boar, the third a dog's head.¹⁹⁹ The archaeologist Alexandre Lenoir added to this that during her journey through the skies the Moon (Diana) changes appearance: in the east she is a horse, in the south a dog and in the west the Virgin.²⁰⁰

I will begin my discussion of the way in which Delacroix may have visualised this transformation with a description of Liberty's head. Her face fully catches the July sunlight; when one takes the towers of Notre-Dame as orientation point, she looks to the west. Although her face is fully human, she dilates her nostrils like a steed. The back of her head is in the shadow, as if it expresses a stage of her transformation that is already in the past. The side flap of her Phrygian cap and a loose strand of hair resemble each other in shape. Their form and position evoke that of animal ears (ill. 42); presumably these have just changed into a strand of hair and a side flap.

¹⁹⁸ Warner, *Monuments & Maidens*, 278-79.

¹⁹⁹ François Noël, *Dictionnaire de la fable [...]*; vol. I (Paris: Le Normant, 1801), 327.

²⁰⁰ Alexandre Lenoir, *La Franche-Maçonnerie rendue à sa véritable origine: ou l'antiquité de la Franche-Maçonnerie prouvée par l'explication des mystères anciens et modernes* (Paris: Fournier, 1814), 152.

Liberty raises the tricolour high above her head so that it streams behind her on the breeze like the manes of a horse. The sash that she wears round her waist flows behind her like a tail, and only moments ago her earring may have been a ring belonging to a bridle. Like the gamin de Paris's toque and her tricolour, her Phrygian cap is not a blatant political symbol; its colour is not the bright red of the French Revolution but reddish brown.²⁰¹ The cap resembles a small furry animal who glares straight ahead and who holds on to her head with his small paws.



42 Delacroix: *Liberty Leading the People*, detail.

In the far right of the painting, the Royal Guards and their horse look intently at the group in the foreground; are they spellbound by the spectacle of animals who change into human beings and the miraculous transformation of the goddess? In this case their horse reacts to the goddess Diana but also to the

²⁰¹ X-rays of the painting show that it was initially bright red but painted over several times until a reddish brown resulted. Toussaint, “*La Liberté guidant le peuple*” de Delacroix, 72.

military drumbeat signal *la diane* (the reveille).²⁰² Just like the horse, the heroes of the barricade, not yet able to see the goddess, obey to the sounds of fighting and the church bells as if these were *la diane*.

The epiphany of a Gallic goddess who also belonged to the Greek and Roman pantheon is only one of the ways in which syncretic Gallic religion is present in *Liberty Leading the People*. Both the Goddess of Liberty and the barricade fighters, who seem to be possessed by ghosts of heroes from the past, also likely embody beliefs dating from pre-Christian France, which contrasted strongly with the authoritarian, exclusive, Catholic state religion of the Restoration. One of the most enduring of these was the Wild Hunt.

²⁰² Alexandre-Toussaint de Gaigne, *Nouveau dictionnaire militaire...* (Paris: Levacher, Métier, 1801), 174, 562.

The Wild Hunt

In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix transforms terrible personal and collective memories into myth and legend: memories of the decomposing bodies of the victims of the July Revolution in the streets of Paris, of his brother Henri's death in battle, and of the horrors of the Napoleonic battlefields, covered with unburied corpses of horses and men, of the martyrdom of The Four Sergeants of La Rochelle and Pierre Louvel (see **Legends of Chivalry**), and of the sad, ghost-like existence of many victims of the Bourbons. Delacroix may have found his inspiration for his portrayal of the barricade fight as a Wild Hunt in Jacques Martin's *La Religion des Gaulois*, but also in contemporary anti-Bourbon satire that made use of legends and ghost stories concerning the Wild Hunt and ghostly hunters. Its knowledge of these contemporary sources enabled the public of 1831 to interpret the barricade fighters as ghostly appearances announcing the end of the Bourbon dynasty.

Jacques Martin interpreted the beliefs in the transmigration of souls,²⁰³ in werewolves and in the Wild Hunt led by Artemis/Diana/Arduina, as remnants of Gallic religion that had survived in modern France as ghost stories. These stories reminded the French of the world that had disappeared after the introduction of Christianity by their Frankish kings. The Wild Hunt is a mythical hunting cortege of souls that can find no rest: unrepentant criminals, those who have died in battle or in some other violent way, suicides, unbaptised children, and people whose bodies lie unburied. These spectres wear the same clothes as when they were alive. They are led by mythical hunters

²⁰³ Martin, *La religion des Gaulois*, vol. 2, book 5, 218

such as Samiel, called Hellequin in France, or mythical kings such as Arthur, and in some versions by Diana, Hecate or another goddess.²⁰⁴ In Gallic religion human beings could easily cross the borders that separated them from animals and from the otherworld. Martin relates the Wild Hunt and Diana to the medieval Witches' Sabbath and to the belief in the existence of werewolves, already common in Antiquity, but also to the Gallic belief that with the help of charmed herbs women could change at will into any animal, and as animals call up the souls from hell.²⁰⁵



43 Robin des Bois (Acte 2, Scène dernière), par Castil-Blaze, Sauvage et Weber. The Wolf's Glen scene. Engraving. 1827. 19 x 27 cm. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The Wild Hunt makes its appearance in Carl Maria von Weber's opera *Der Freischütz* (1821), where two hunters hear the Wild Hunt raging through the sky when they enter the haunted Wolf's Glen at midnight to ask the help of

²⁰⁴ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 31-64, (original Italian edition 1966, original English language edition 1983); Anne Lombard-Jourdan, *Aux origines de carnaval: Un dieu gaulois ancêtre des rois de France* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2005), 211-32; Amélie Bosquet, *La Normandie romanesque et merveilleuse: Traditions, légendes et superstitions populaires de cette province* (Paris: Techener, 1845), 60-83.

²⁰⁵ Martin, *La religion des Gaulois*, vol. 2, book 4, 62.

the Black Hunter. With his assistance they cast miracle bullets that will bring them victory in a shooting contest. Delacroix saw an adaptation of this opera during his stay in London in 1825; he was greatly impressed by the eerie Wolf's Glen scene and its set, a diorama designed by Clarkson Stanfield.²⁰⁶ In France, another adaptation, called *Robin-des-Bois ou les trois balles*, caused a stir because Samiel, the Black Hunter of Weber's original opera, was renamed Robin-des-Bois (ill. 43). The vicomte de La Rochefoucauld, the directeur des beaux-arts who spoiled Delacroix's life during the Restoration, put a stop to performances of *Robin-des-Bois* that the Odéon theatre in Paris had scheduled in the aftermath of Charles X's coronation on 29 May 1825, because of the title's too obvious allusion to Charles X's nickname and his much criticised hunting hobby.²⁰⁷ The association between the king and the devilish leader of the Wild Hunt could not be effaced anymore and it still served the ex-officier des chasseurs of 1830.

The *grand veneur* (Master of the Hunt) or *chasseur noir* (Black Hunter) of Fontainebleau is a legendary spectral apparition connected to the Wild Hunt. The appearance of the grand veneur to king Henry IV in broad daylight, seen by many people, is mentioned in Pierre Matthieu's *Histoire de France [...] du règne du Roy Henry IV* (1605).²⁰⁸ Matthieu relates that one day the king and his company were hunting in the forest of Fontainebleau. The cries of hunters, the sounds of hunting horns and barking dogs were heard, first at a distance

²⁰⁶ See for this and for the way in which London theatre performances in general influenced Delacroix's appreciation of Shakespeare and Goethe Robert Vilain, "Faust, Part One and France: Stapfer's Translation, Delacroix's Lithographs, Goethe's Responses," *Publications of the English Goethe Society* 81, no. 2 (2012), 73-135.

²⁰⁷ See La Rochefoucauld's letter to the king of 17 June 1825, cited in Imbert de Saint-Amand, *La Duchesse de Berry et la cour de Charles X* (Paris: Dentu, 1888), 238.

²⁰⁸ I cite the edition of 1620. Pierre Matthieu, *Histoire de France & des choses mémorables advenues aux Provinces estrangères durant sept années de Paix du règne du Roy Henry IV, Roy de France & de Navarre, ensemble le discours déplorable et lamentable de sa Mort*, vol. 1 (Genève: Pernet, 1620), 163.

and then nearby. Suddenly *un grand homme noir* appeared in the thick shrubbery, crying “*M’entendez-vous?*” (Do you hear me? or Do you understand me?) and disappeared again.

During the Restoration, several French authors took up this story and transformed the grand veneur into a ghost who appeared to people whose end was nigh. One of these authors was Madame de Genlis, Louis-Philippe’s former governess; in her *Histoire de Henri le Grand* (1815) she writes that the appearance of the grand veneur, together with the birth of monsters, rains of blood and other disasters, was believed in seventeenth-century France to have prophesied the murder of Henry IV in 1610.²⁰⁹ In Paul Lacroix’s fictitious memoirs of Gabrielle d’Estrées, Henry IV’s mistress, published in 1829, the grand veneur appears to her and many other people, again in broad daylight, only a couple of days before her premature death in 1599. This time his words are no longer “*M’entendez-vous?*” but “*Amende-toi!*” (Mend your ways!), words that imply that her imminent death is a punishment for her sins. The grand veneur is described here as the ghost of a man hanged for poaching in the royal woods, and as an apparition with the hairy face and claws of a wild animal.²¹⁰

In Lacroix’s book the ghost of a poor man, executed for hunting in the woods of his own country like his Gallic forebears, appears in animal shape to announce death and revenge to the first Bourbon king and his mistress. In *Liberty Leading the People* he seems to appear, again in broad daylight, as a poor lonely ghost of a hunter, dressed in black, who seems to have shed his wolf skin only moments ago, to announce to the Bourbons the impending demise of

²⁰⁹ I cite the second edition of 1816. Comtesse Stéphanie Félicité de Genlis, *Histoire de Henri le Grand*, 2nd edition, vol. 2 (Paris: Maradan, 1816), 369-70.

²¹⁰ Paul Lacroix, *Mémoires de Gabrielle d’Estrées*, vol. 4 (Paris: Mame et Delaunay Vallée, 1829), 307-12.

their dynasty. He forms the visual equivalent of the grand bourdon's menacing sound. This Black Hunter appears together with the other lost souls of the Wild Hunt; he chases another Black Hunter, Charles X, out of his country, and frees Robin Hood from his association with this king.²¹¹

²¹¹ The Robin Hood of Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819) –one of Delacroix's favourite novels- is an almost superhuman hero, leader of a band of outlawed Anglo-Saxon rebels who fight England's Norman king John. Although Robin Hood and his Merry Men keep themselves alive by poaching in the king's woods, Robin Hood seems to be the real king of Sherwood Forest. These simple men deliver the English people from its evil ruler, and finally pledge their allegiance to another Norman king, Richard Lionheart, John's brother. William E. Simeone, "The Robin Hood of Ivanhoe," *American Folklore* 74 (1961): 230-34.

Legends of Chivalry

In *Liberty Leading the People* the Salon public could not only recognise references to the Wild Hunt and the Gallic goddess who personifies the Ardennes, but also to a later legend of the Ardennes. During Delacroix's childhood, the story of the Four Sons of Aymon, their nephew Maugis, their enchanted horse Bayard, and their brave struggle against Charlemagne was known in countless versions; the most important were those of the popular *Bibliothèque bleue* and *Bibliothèque universelle des romans*.²¹² For the Four Sons of Aymon the Ardennes region is the place where they hide from Charlemagne's wrath. Their horse Bayard can understand human speech and sometimes behaves like a human being. In the popular versions of Delacroix's time, Maugis frees him from a dragon whose blood brings forth toads, spiders and snakes when Maugis kills him.²¹³ Charlemagne drowns Bayard in the river Meuse, but the enchanted horse survives and ever since roams the woods of the Ardennes, the region famous for its cavalry horses, alone and free like Arduina, its patron goddess.

The stories of the Four Sons of Aymon are stories of rebellion, banishment, and liberation from worldly tyrants and monsters from hell. The five male barricade fighters in the foreground can be associated with the Four Sons of Aymon and their nephew, and with the five great contemporary martyrs for liberty, the Four Sergeants of La Rochelle and Louvel, the murderer of the duc de Berry. The public of 1831 could easily liken the Four Sons of Aymon to the Four Sergeants of La Rochelle; in illustrations to folk editions from the early

²¹² For the evolution of the story of Bayard and the Four Sons of Aymon and its survival in the folklore of the Ardennes see Marie-Dominique Leclerc, "Le merveilleux féérique dans *l'Histoire des quatre fils Aymon*: Des manuscrits aux versions de la *Bibliothèque bleue*," *Marvels and Tales* 10, no. 1 (1996): 5-51, no. 2: 207-41.

²¹³ See f. i. "Histoire de Maugis d'Aigremont," *Bibliothèque universelle des romans* 1 (July 1778): 15-16.

years of the nineteenth century, the Four Sons of Aymon and other knights from medieval stories were often depicted as contemporary soldiers and officers (ill. 44),²¹⁴ and the four martyred sergeants may have reminded many people of the Four Sons of Aymon. The association of the horse Bayard, a symbol of liberty, with the noble Bayard, the embodiment of chivalry, dates from shortly after the knight Bayard's death; it would have been understood by men such as Eugène de Beauharnais²¹⁵ who were honoured with the epithet Bayard.



44 François Georin: *Les quatre fils Aymon*, from a popular Épinal edition of the story. Engraving. 1830. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The horse Bayard features not only in the story of the Four Sons of Aymon but also in Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, best known in France through the Comte de Tressan's translation of 1780, *Roland Furieux*. This sixteenth-century chivalric romance about Charlemagne's paladin and cousin Roland, a knight mad with unrequited love, was immensely popular in France during the Napoleonic era, together with James Macpherson's "Gaelic" epic *Ossian* (1760-63). In *Roland Furieux*, Roland and other French heroes save France from her external enemies; their story offered a ready-made mythology for the emperor, the new Charlemagne, who had gathered his own heroes and paladins around him.²¹⁶ Eugène de Beauharnais was a new Bayard; several other army leaders, such as Lannes and Saint-Hilaire, were known as "Roland of the army."²¹⁷

²¹⁴ David M. Hopkin, *Soldier and peasant in French popular culture, 1766-1870* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 230-31.

²¹⁵ Kress, *The Orlando Legend in Nineteenth-Century French Literature*, 8.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, IX-X.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.



45 Charles-Nicolas Cochin le jeune del., Nicolas Ponce sculps.: Astolphe détruit le palais d'Atlant (detail). Illustration of Ariosto, *Roland Furieux*, ch. 22. (Transl. d'Ussieux. Paris: Brunet, 1776). Copper engraving. Lunel: Bibliothèque municipale.

Napoleon and his generals loved the heroes in *Roland Furieux*, their enchanted steeds and their magical weapons, such as Roland's sword Durendal or the magical horn of the paladin Astolfo that puts to flight anyone who hears it (ill. 45).²¹⁸ The attributes of Delacroix's barricade fighters, their swords and sabres, and the horn that one of them wears on

his cap, allowed the Salon public of 1831 to understand them all as modern versions of these heroes of legend, whose virtues had been extolled in Napoleonic propaganda. When the Goddess of Liberty, or Diana/Arduina, is indeed transforming from a horse into

the Virgin, as I suggested in the chapter **Liberty (a Horse?)**, this horse can perhaps be identified with Bayard, the free, enchanted horse of the Ardennes.

The combination of themes from the story of the Four Sons of Aymon and *Roland Furieux* probably enabled Delacroix to suggest a contrast between two Charlemagnes in *Liberty Leading the People*. One is Napoleon, the true heir to Charlemagne's greatness, who managed to win the loyalty of a new generation of French heroes. The other are the two last Bourbon kings, Louis XVIII and Charles X, direct descendants of Charlemagne, who antagonised the French people and executed French heroes such as the Four Sergeants of La Rochelle and Louvel.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

Under the Soil of Modern Paris

After this short excursion into medieval legend, I will now return to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ideas on Gallic culture and religion that likely influenced Delacroix. *Liberty Leading the People* can be understood as a monument which shows the slain enemies of liberty lying at the feet of the barricade fighters. The painting refers to religious monuments and works of art ranging from France's remotest, pre-Christian past to the nineteenth century. Just like its allusions to the Wild Hunt, its references to monuments stress the contrast between the liberty, artistic, religious and political, of the Gallic past and the tyranny of the Bourbon monarchy.

In the **Introduction** I pointed out that ideas on the religious and political history of France to which Delacroix alludes in this painting stem from a wide variety of sources that he may have combined deliberately. They range from books by Catholic authors such as Jacques Martin and François-René de Chateaubriand to the writings of freemasons such as Alexandre Lenoir. In this way Delacroix may have pointed to the existence of a vast literature on religious history in which Catholic as well as non-Catholic authors undermined the supremacy of Catholicism in France,²¹⁹ and to the injustice and stupidity of the missionaries who had thrown only the non-Christian part of this literature onto their pyres.

In *Liberty Leading the People* the barricade fighters seem to rise from the ground behind the barricades where the pavement has been broken up, almost as if they stem from an earlier period in the city's history, one that lies hidden under its modern streets and buildings. In the background the towers of Notre-

²¹⁹ For a good survey of this literature see Julie Boch, *Les dieux désenchantés: La fable dans la pensée française de Huet à Voltaire, 1680-1760* (Paris: Champion, 2002).

Dame, the Gothic cathedral that had dominated Paris for over six hundred years already, and where Napoleon had been crowned, are visible.

The Gothic cathedral was the legacy of an era in which the French cities first began to liberate themselves from the power wielded over them by the clergy and nobility. After the July Revolution, it came to be understood as the embodiment of the principles of liberty, social solidarity and progress that the new government promoted as enduring values of the French nation. One of the most famous evocations of the Gothic cathedral as a symbol of liberty is Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*, published only a couple of months before *Liberty Guiding the People* was put on show at the Salon of 1831, but probably after the painting was completed. The liberal interpretation of the importance of the Gothic cathedral in French history contrasted with the Catholic, royalist opinion that the Gothic cathedral formed the testimony of the glorious Christian and royal past.²²⁰

In *Liberty Leading the People* Notre-Dame's role as a symbol of liberty is also partly based on the cathedral's importance during the July Revolution; the tricolour was first hoisted from its towers on 28 July, its bells tolled the death knell of the Bourbon monarchy and welcomed liberty. Still, its presence as a symbol of liberty in the painting cannot be fully understood without considering the archaeological find that had been made in the cathedral during the early eighteenth century, the *Pilier des Nautes* (Pillar of the Boatmen).

In 1711 a new choir altar, known as *The Vow of Louis XIII*, was erected in the choir of Notre-Dame over an equally new vault for the archbishops of Paris.

²²⁰ Stephanie A. Glaser, "'Deutsche Baukunst,' 'Architecture Française': The Use of the Gothic Cathedral in the Creation of National Memory in Nineteenth-Century Germany and France," in *Orientations: Space/Time/Image/Word*, edited by Claus Clüver, Véronique Plesch and Leo Hoek (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 77-92.

Directly under the new altar, workers found an old wall in which nine large cubical stones decorated with bas-reliefs and inscriptions had been inserted. The inscriptions proved that the stones had originally belonged to a pillar, the base of a statue of Jupiter that had been erected by the Parisian *nautes* (barge masters) during the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius (14-37).

46 Fragment of the Pilier des Nautes with the dedicatory inscription.



The dedicatory inscription (ill. 46) of this proud monument reads, translated into English, as follows: “To Tiberius Caesar Augustus and Jupiter, both so good and so great, the boatmen of the territory of Parisii, with funds from their community treasury, have erected this monument.” The *Pilier des Nautes*, now in the Musée de Cluny, was on display in the Musée des monuments français during the early nineteenth century. In his description of this monument Alexandre Lenoir, the founder and administrator of the Musée des monuments français, stressed its importance as a vestige of a free, self-governing Gaul.²²¹

The *Pilier des Nautes* plays an important part in the influential *Histoire physique, civile et morale de Paris depuis les premiers temps historiques jusqu'à nos jours* (1821-22)²²² by the archaeologist and historian Jacques-Antoine Dulaure, a freemason like Lenoir. His writings testified to his dislike of the Bourbons, the nobility and the clergy, and to his great interest in the Gauls, the forebears of the Third Estate, as the founders of France and the city of

²²¹ Alexandre Lenoir, *Description historique et chronologique des monumens de sculpture réunis au Musée des Monumens Français*. I cite the 7th edition (Paris: Lenoir/Levrault, An XI, [1803]), 65-79.

²²² I cite the third edition (Paris: Baudouin, 1825).

Paris.²²³ In this particular book, Dulaure wanted to shed new light on two aspects of the history of Paris, the city's origins and its sad and cruel history under Frankish rule; he believed that these were misrepresented in royalist writings.²²⁴

The royalist foundation myth of Paris, still repeated during the early nineteenth century, was that the Trojan prince Francus, son of Hector, who had escaped from the sack of Troy, had become king of Gaul and had founded a city there that he named Paris after his uncle.²²⁵ This myth made Francus, or Francion as he was also called, the founding father of both France and the Frankish people, founder of the Merovingian dynasty, the Frankish dynasty that had conquered Gaul, and ancestor of all French kings. It represented the Franks not as barbaric Germanic invaders but as a highly civilised people that had lived in France from time immemorial; their level of civilisation, much higher than that of the Gauls, had enabled the Franks to become the ruling class.²²⁶

According to Dulaure's alternative foundation theory, however, Paris was a Gallic name that had nothing to do with Troy. The city had been founded by a Celtic tribe, the Parisii, very humble people whose origins were obscure, not more than fifty years before Julius Caesar's conquest of Gaul during the years 58-52 BC. During this earliest period, Paris was not yet a city but a settlement consisting of a few scattered huts. Most of these were situated on the Ile de la

²²³ For biographical details see lemma "Dulaure (Jacques-Antoine)" in *Nouvelle biographie générale depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours*; edited by Jean-Christien-Ferdinand Hofer, vol. 15 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1856), 122-24.

²²⁴ Dulaure, *Histoire physique, civile et morale de Paris*, vol. 1, 3-4.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 73

²²⁶ Albert Barrera-Vidal, "Mythes de fondation de la France: Une contribution à l'étude des autostéréotypes français," in *Mythe et politique: Actes du Colloque de Liège 14-16 septembre 1989 organisé par le Centre de recherches mythologiques de l'Université de Paris X et le Centre d'histoire des religions de l'Université de Liège*, edited by François Jouan and André Motte (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1990), 9-22.

Cité, where Notre-Dame would later be built, with the river Seine as their only protection in times of danger. During this period and long after, the greatest part of modern Paris remained woodland. Time, political events, and the soil level that was continually raised to protect the city from flooding, had caused the disappearance of the Paris of the Gauls. During the Middle Ages the Christians built their churches over heathen temples; the sacred stones from the Gallic woods, which had remained visible in the streets of Paris for a long time, disappeared.²²⁷ Dulaure stressed the Gallic religious tradition of peaceful coexistence of the gods of victors and vanquished, of Gallic and Roman religion.²²⁸ Lastly, following Lenoir, Dulaure believed that the *Pilier des Nautes* portrayed not only Gallic gods but the Gauls themselves, and that the dedication illustrated the independent spirit of the tribal Gauls, these very ordinary people who had founded Paris.

According to Dulaure, the dedication of the *Pilier des Nautes* proved without a doubt that a self-governing corporation of barge masters had been formed in Paris during the earliest period of the city's existence. Since goods and victuals could be far better transported by water than by road, their trade was of vital importance. For this reason, the originally Gallic or Gallo-Roman corporation still functioned when France was already ruled by Frankish kings.²²⁹ Other authors writing during the Restoration went even further than this. In 1829 the philologist and poet François Raynouard, who had stepped down as secrétaire perpétuel of the *Académie française* when in 1826 the government attempted to curb the liberty of the press, published a study on the history of urban law in France, *Du droit municipal en France sous la domination romaine*

²²⁷ Dulaure, *Histoire physique, civile et morale de Paris*, vol. 1, 74-87.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 114. See also Lenoir, *Description historique et chronologique des monumens de sculpture*, 66.

²²⁹ Dulaure, *Histoire physique, civile et morale de Paris*, vol. 1, 112-13, 115.

et sous les trois dynasties. In this study he presented the symbolic ship in the coat of arms of Paris as proof that the Romans had allowed the corporation of barge masters to grow so important that in the end it came to govern the city. The boatmen had kindled the city of Paris's characteristic spirit of independence and rebellion.²³⁰

47 Jupiter on the Pilier des Nautes.



48 Cernunnos, the Celtic vegetation deity with deer antlers, on the Pilier des Nautes.



²³⁰ During the ancien régime the head of the municipal government was called *Prévot des marchands de l'eau* (Provost of the water merchants); Raynouard used this as added evidence for his theory. [François-Just-Marie] Raynouard, *Du droit municipal en France sous la domination romaine et sous les trois dynasties*, vol. 1 (Paris: Sautet, 1829), XLII.



Dulaure's book may have provided Delacroix with the historical information that enabled him to suggest that the city of Paris and the woods of the Ardennes still formed a continuum, so that woodland animals coming from their hiding places could really appear in Paris during the July Revolution. The painter may have regarded the *Pilier des Nautes* itself as a testimony of Gallic independence, religious tolerance and artistic liberty. The monument is decorated with figures of Roman and Gallic gods in human, semi-human and animal shape (ill. 47, 48, 49), enabling Delacroix to place his own painting and Grandville's animal caricatures in a Gallic tradition that was supposedly ignored by Quatremère de Quincy and other purist defenders of Classical culture.

50 An.: Les animaux rares: ou la translation de la ménagerie royale au Temple, le 20 aoust 1792 [...]. Etching. 18 x 24 cm. 1792. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Just like Delacroix's transformation of the Goddess of Liberty from Barbier's *La Curée* into a huntress from Antiquity, this was a deliberate demonstration of originality and independence. Not just the Goddess of Liberty, but also Grandville's caricatures of courtiers and ministers as disgusting or weird monsters who are chased away by the people, or Barbier's strong image of a savage boar hunt have more probable ancestors in caricatures from the French Revolution.²³¹ Early in his career Delacroix had copied one of these images, *Les animaux rares* (1792, ill. 50),²³² in which a *sans-culotte* is shown driving the royal family to the Temple prison.



51 Illustration (detail) from Michel Félibien: *Histoire de la Ville de Paris [...]*. Vol. 1. Paris: Desprez, Desessartz, 1725. Between p. CXXVIII and p. CXXIX. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Two of the reliefs of the *Pilier des Nautes* show a procession of men, some of them bearded, who wear caps and are armed with pikes and shields (ill. 51). Dulaure took these figures to be representatives of the Gallic nations which traded on the river Seine and supported the Roman legions, while both Jacques Martin and Alexandre Lenoir believed that the boatmen of Paris themselves

²³¹ See Rolf Reichardt and Hubertus Kohle, *Visualizing the Revolution: Politics and the Pictorial Arts in Late Eighteenth Century France* (London: Reaktion, 2008), 52-60 for other depictions of despotism as a monster that has to be beaten by the people, and a depiction of the storming of the Bastille as a big game hunt to chase the monster from its lair.

²³² Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Eugène Delacroix*, 98.

were depicted.²³³ These roughly carved figures, who come from the distant past and from below the soil of Paris, look straight at their modern descendants. In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix seems to have brought these very simple people, the real founders of Paris and France, back to life. The old man who looks out from behind the arm of the Vendéen, and another background figure waving a sabre, dimly visible through the smoke, wear caps that resemble those of the figures on the *Pilier des Nautes* (ill. 52); they could well be Gauls who emerge from the mist of time. Delacroix seems to suggest that they, their gods and the enchanted, haunted woods that they once inhabited, have risen from below the soil of the modern city to fight for the liberation of France.

52 Delacroix: *Liberty Leading the People*, details.



The unkempt, bearded barricade fighters of *Liberty Leading the People* are not only the soldiers of Valmy and Jemappes, or modern, historical, legendary and literary heroes and ghosts. In them, the independent, self-governing Gauls who founded the liberty-loving city of Paris seem to have returned to life, and with

²³³ Dulaure, *Histoire physique, civile et morale de Paris*, vol.1, 106; Martin, *La Religion des Gaulois*, vol. 2, book 4, 62-63; Lenoir, *Description historique et chronologique des monumens de sculpture*, 68.

them their syncretic religion that was so far removed from Catholic state religion. They are the people from the Northern part of Gaul that the Romans called *Gallia Comata* (Long-Haired Gaul or Hairy Gaul) after the hairstyle worn by its inhabitants, tribal warriors who were not yet Romanised.²³⁴ Like the sans-culottes during the French Revolution, the barricade fighters wear long worker's trousers and not noblemen's knee breeches, so that they resemble *Gallia Braccata* (trouser-wearing Gaul, after the Gauls' usual attire).

53 Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson: *The Apotheosis of the French Heroes Who Died for their Country During the War for Liberty*. Oil on canvas. 192 x 184 cm. 1802. Rueil-Malmaison: Musée national des châteaux de Malmaison et Bois-Préau.



Delacroix's depiction of Gallic heroes as very ordinary people of 1830 but possessed by ghosts of Gallic heroes, contrasts with paintings featuring Celtic heroes that were made for Napoleon, that great admirer of *Ossian*. In Girodet's

²³⁴ Philip Freeman, *The Philosopher and the Druids: A Journey Among the Ancient Celts* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 93.

The Apotheosis of the French Heroes Who Died for their Country During the War for Liberty (ill. 53, 1802) a paradise replete with Gallic symbolism is the meeting place of the ghosts of modern heroes and the ghosts of those of the past; Ingres's *The Dream of Ossian* (ill. 54, 1813) depicts a row of ghostly Celtic heroes as grey, shadowy appearances.²³⁵



54 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: *The Dream of Ossian*. Oil on canvas. 348 x 275 cm. 1813. Montauban: Musée Ingres.

²³⁵ Traeger "L'épiphanie de la liberté," 22.

The Masonic Isis cult

In *Liberty Leading the People* the Vendéen, a mason by profession, symbolises the important role of freemasons during the July Revolution. The contemporary publications on the origins of Paris, and Gallic religious and political tolerance and independence, to which *Liberty Leading the People* may well allude, were mostly written by freemasons.

In his explanation of the origins of freemasonry, *La Franche-Maçonnerie rendue à sa véritable origine* (1814), Alexandre Lenoir stated that Christianity was one of the three elements which constitute freemasonry, the other two being Judaism and Egyptian religion; he regarded freemasonry itself as an all-embracing religion that contained the wisdom of all others. Lenoir pointed to the omnipresence of the Isis cult in the Classical world; Isis was regarded as the universal goddess or nature itself, and a goddess who was honoured under many different names, one of them Diana, in many different places.²³⁶

Both Isis and the Virgin Mary are depicted as mothers with their child on their lap, and the myth of Isis and her son Horus, the Egyptian sun god, resembles the New Testament history of the birth of Christ and Christ's death and resurrection. Masonic writers such as Lenoir assumed that Christianity was a continuation of the Egyptian worship of the sun as the source of life. According to Lenoir, Jupiter, the god worshipped by the boatmen of Paris on the Ile de la Cité, was one of the many mythological images that clothed the sun with human form.²³⁷

²³⁶ Alexandre Lenoir, *La Franche-Maçonnerie rendue à sa véritable origine*, 79. See also Jurgis Baltrusaitis, *Essai sur la légende d'un mythe: La quête d'Isis, introduction à l'Égyptomanie* (Paris: Perrin, 1967), 19.

²³⁷ Lenoir, *La Franche-Maçonnerie rendue à sa véritable origine*, 24.

Masonic writers were influenced by the theories on Egyptian religion as veneration of the sun, the moon and the stars that Charles Dupuis had unfolded in *L'Origine de tous les cultes*, the book that during the Restoration had landed on the missionaries' pyres. They also built on earlier non-masonic writings, including those of Jacques Martin, which taught that the Egyptian mother goddess Isis had been worshipped by the Gauls before they were Christianised, and that many important French churches had originally been Isis temples.²³⁸ Led by the presence of a sculpted zodiac in the north portal of Notre-Dame (ill. 55), freemasons regarded the cathedral as an Isis temple that had been transformed into a Christian church.²³⁹ Many subscribed to the traditional opinion that the city of Paris took its name not from the Parisii, as Dulaure believed, but from another Isis temple in its vicinity; "Par Isis" was believed to mean "near Isis." The ship in the coat of arms of the city of Paris was interpreted by them as the ship of the boatmen, but also as the ship of Isis, the protectress of navigation.



55 The north portal of Notre-Dame with a part of the zodiac.

In early-nineteenth century France, the belief in the relationship between Christian churches and pre-Christian religion was widespread. Even Chateaubriand wrote in *Le Génie du Christianisme* (1802), the most important defence of Christian religion published in early nineteenth-century France, that the Gothic cathedral was a logical continuation of the sacred oak forests

²³⁸ Baltrusaitis, *Essai sur la légende d'un mythe*, 27-48.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

of the ancient Gauls. Chateaubriand wrote that birds believed the church towers to be trees and that every aspect of a Gothic church interior contributed to its resemblance to a labyrinthine wood.²⁴⁰ Lenoir had it that not only the zodiacs present in medieval churches, but also church vaults decorated with stars painted on an azure ground were remnants of the religion of the Gauls; the Gauls had sacrificed in their fields and forests because the vault of heaven was their temple.²⁴¹



56 Coat of arms of Paris, 1811-1814.

In 1811, in recognition of the strong connexion between Paris and the Gallic veneration of Isis, Napoleon had given the capital permission to add her image to its coat of arms. Isis sat enthroned on the bow of her ship (ill. 56) until 1814, when she was suppressed by the new Bourbon government.²⁴² Napoleon, that shrewd manipulator of freemasonry and Christianity, had recognised the world's oldest and most universally venerated goddess as patron deity of Paris and its most important religious building. After his downfall, the Bourbons re-enthroned Our Lady; writings such as Charles Dupuis's, which questioned the central importance of Christianity, were publicly burned. During the Restoration, Napoleon's soldiers, for whom the return of the Bourbons had meant the end of their careers, kept the masonic Isis cult alive, but it also lived on as an alternative to Christian religion for the French who

²⁴⁰ Vicomte François-René de Chateaubriand, *Le génie du Christianisme*, vol. 5 of *Oeuvres* (Paris: Legrand, Troussel et Pomey, 1857), 279-80.

²⁴¹ Lenoir, *La Franche-Maçonnerie rendue à sa véritable origine*, 284.

²⁴² See Baltrusaitis, *Essai sur la légende d'un mythe*, 27, 67-69, 73-9, for a summary of the several theories on the relationship between Isis and Paris that were discussed in early nineteenth-century France, and Napoleon's actions in 1811.

had lost contact with the Catholic church.²⁴³ In *Liberty Leading the People* the universal goddess and protectress of Paris seems to come to life again as Diana, one of her many alter egos, to retake her rightful place. Notre-Dame is present as a symbol of liberty, as a symbolic wood in the centre of Paris, and as a pre-Christian temple, a remnant of the culture of the Gauls who worshipped the universe in their sacred woods.

There is no evidence that Eugène Delacroix was ever a member of a masonic lodge, but during the Napoleonic era, Charles Delacroix, his father, then a prefect, belonged to the circles where freemasonry recruited its adepts. Charles Delacroix's close friends Ferdinand Guillemardet and General Jean-Baptiste Cervoni, whose daughter lived with the Delacroix family, were freemasons. His son-in-law Raymond de Verninac, in whose house Eugène and his mother lived after the death of Charles Delacroix, seems to have held a position of some importance in Parisian freemasonry.²⁴⁴

Charles-Henry, Eugène Delacroix's oldest brother, the aide-de-camp to Eugène de Beauharnais, may have been familiar with the masonic Isis cult that was kept alive by ex-soldiers during the Restoration. Eugène de Beauharnais had accompanied Napoleon, his stepfather, during the Egyptian campaign of 1798-99 that had brought large numbers of archaeologists, antiquarians and other savants to Egypt. There freemasonry flourished among the French; the Egyptian mysteries inspired the rites of many masonic lodges

²⁴³ Darius A. Spieth, *Napoleon's Sorcerers: The Sophisians* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 109-10.

²⁴⁴ All three men are recorded as freemasons in the important *Fichier Bossu*, held by the Bibliothèque nationale de France: FM Fichier Bossu). The card system, in which more than 160.000 freemasons from the 1750-1850 period are recorded, has been digitised by the BNF. A French historian, Thomas Fressin, has developed an index and search machine to make the information in the *Fichier Bossu* accessible: <http://fichier-bossu.fr/stats.php>. I thank him for his kind help with the interpretation of this information.

once Napoleon made freemasonry a semi-official institution. Napoleon himself indulged rumours that he had become a freemason during the Egyptian campaign and that he and General Kléber had founded the Isis Lodge of Cairo.²⁴⁵ Eugène de Beauharnais was a freemason before he became viceroy of Italy in 1805, where he was proclaimed grand master of the Grand Orient of Italy. Several French military leaders, Kellermann, Murat, Jourdan and Masséna, joined Italian notabilities in the governance of Italian freemasonry.²⁴⁶ Charles-Henry Delacroix was likely a master freemason,²⁴⁷ and he was close to Eugène de Beauharnais. He may have been hoping for a new flourishing of freemasonry when Louis-Philippe would accept the office of grand master. Although they went to mass every Sunday,²⁴⁸ the cult of Isis was also celebrated by Prince Eugène and his followers: during the festivities for the birth of the King of Rome, Napoleon's son and heir, in 1811, the decorations of the temple of the Grand Orient in Milan, the city where the viceroy resided, were inspired by Isis, Horus and Osiris, the lodge itself was temporarily transformed into an Isis temple, and during the celebratory ritual Horus, Isis and Osiris were invoked.²⁴⁹

For Eugène Delacroix, both freemasonry and the cult of chivalry may have been inextricably linked with his childhood during the Napoleonic era. Ambitious young men such as Prince Eugène and his brother, his heroes during

²⁴⁵ Spieth, *Napoleon's Sorcerers*, 23-26.

²⁴⁶ François Collaveri, *Napoléon, empereur franc-maçon* (Paris: Tallandier, 1986), 22, 136-37.

²⁴⁷ One of the records in the *Fichier Bossu* (BNF: MF *Fichier Bossu* 173, La Claverie – Laduranty) is that of Charles de La Croix fils, officer of the Imperial Guard, who was recorded on 30 July 1805 as a non-resident member with the degree of master of the Mère Loge Écossaise of Marseilles. Charles-Henry Delacroix seems to have been the only officer of the Imperial Guard active in 1805 with a surname that could be spelled as Delacroix, De La Croix etc.. He may have been referred to as “de La Croix fils” because his father had resided in Marseilles as prefect of the Département Bouches-du-Rhône. General Cervoni, his father's close friend, was registered as a member of the same lodge. For a list of officers of the Imperial Guard in 1805 see Émile Marco de Saint Hilaire, *Histoire anecdotique, politique et militaire de la Garde Impériale*, vol. 1 (Bruxelles: Meline, Cans et Co., 1846), 261.

²⁴⁸ Oman, *Napoleon's Viceroy*, 216.

²⁴⁹ Collaveri, *Napoléon, empereur franc-maçon*, 149-51.

these days and long after, had formed a brotherhood of knights who had been prepared to give their lives to bring liberty, enlightenment, truth, reason, and progress to a benighted Europe. These men were initiates in a universal wisdom that went far beyond Catholic dogma. In Restoration France, the light that they had tried to spread was extinguished; only the light of book burnings was now allowed. Freemasonry lost the importance that it had held during the Napoleonic era and royalists distrusted it; for these two reasons Delacroix may have decided against joining a lodge.

In *Liberty Leading the People*, Notre-Dame has returned to its original function as an Isis temple, with Artemis/Diana/Arduina, one (or three?) of Isis's many alter egos, goddess of the hunt and the forests, leading the French people's struggle for liberty. A heathen goddess takes the central place in French history that the Bourbons had reserved for the Virgin Mary.

Conflicting Vows

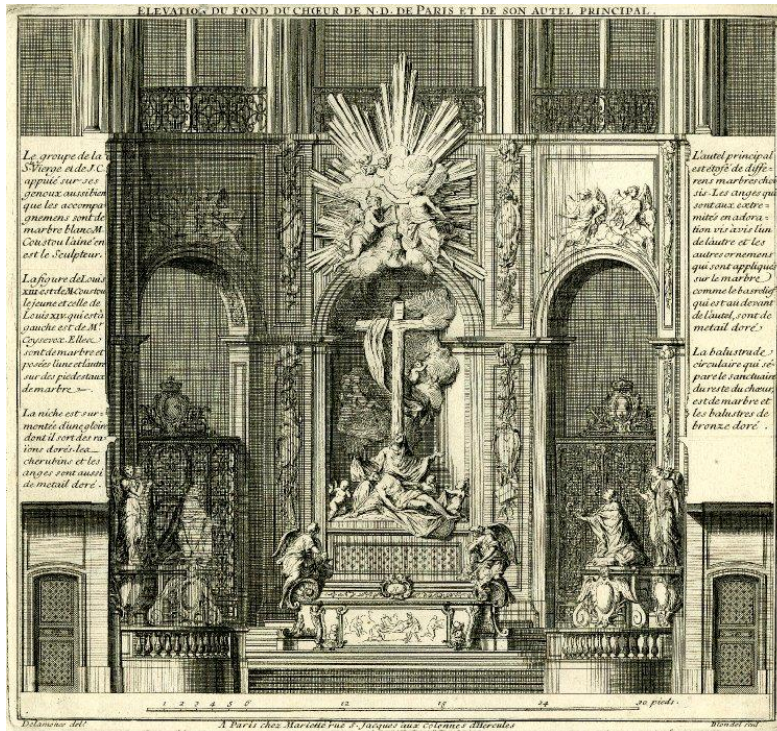
Particularly one painting created during the Restoration, Ingres's *Vow of Louis XIII*, expresses the bond between the Bourbons and Our Lady. In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix satirises not only Ingres's painting and its examples, but also the wording and political implications of Louis XIII's vow.

Ingres's *Vow of Louis XIII* stands in a tradition that goes back to the seventeenth century. The altar of the Vow of Louis XIII, the main altar of Notre-Dame, built on the spot where the remnants of the *Pilier des Nautes*, dedicated by the Gauls to Jupiter, had been found, forms the grandest expression of this tradition. The altar was erected by Louis XIV, in obeisance to the vow made by his father, Louis XIII, in 1638. Out of gratefulness for the ending of religious and civil strife in France and for the queen's pregnancy after a childless marriage of many years, Louis XIII had placed France under the protection of the Virgin Mary. In his vow he used the words: "... we have declared and declare that, in taking the most holy and glorious Virgin as the special protectress of our Kingdom, we dedicate to her, ourselves, our state, our Crown and our subjects."²⁵⁰ The vow stipulated that an altar to the Virgin was to be erected in Notre-Dame; it would depict Louis XIII presenting his crown and sceptre to the Virgin. It also demanded that on the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin (15 August, the date on which Napoleon's birthday would be celebrated during the Empire)²⁵¹ the city government and the sovereign companies of magistrates of Paris would render solemn homage to the Virgin in Notre-Dame. The wording of Louis XIII's vow and his command

²⁵⁰ Cited in Martha Mel Stumberg Edmunds, *Piety and Politics: Imaging Divine Kingship in Louis XIV's Chapel at Versailles* (Cranbury NJ: Associated University Presses, 2002), 43-44.

²⁵¹ Kroen, *Politics and Theater*, 164.

to the city government of Paris bespeak the authority of a ruler by divine right, mediator between God and the French people.²⁵² It was a far cry from the wording of the dedication of the boatmen, which stresses the proud independence of their corporation.



57 Jacques-François Blondel: Elévation du fond du chœur de N.D. de Paris [...]. From the series *L'Architecture française*, published by Jean Mariette. Etching. 23 x 24,5 cm. 1727. London: The British Museum.

Louis XIV's altar is the work of Nicolas Coustou, Guillaume Coustou and Antoine Coysevox. A *Pietà* forms the centre of the pyramidal altar composition (ill. 57); it depicts the Virgin Mary who supports the dead Christ against her knees; the two are surrounded by angels. The altar is flanked by two larger-than-life portrait statues of Louis XIII and XIV who kneel before the Virgin. Louis XIII offers her his crown and sceptre while Louis XIV renews his father's vow. The dedicatory inscription describes Louis XIV as the defender of true religion and tamer of heresy.²⁵³

²⁵² Edmunds, *Piety and Politics*, 41.

²⁵³ For a more detailed description of the altar and the dedicatory text see *Ibid.*, 84-85.

During the French Revolution Liberty superseded the king and Our Lady. Louis XIV's altar was removed, and for the *Fête de la Raison* (Festival of Reason) of 10 November 1793 an altar of Liberty was erected in Notre-Dame; on this occasion an actress personified Liberty (ill. 58).²⁵⁴ With the return of the Bourbons the altar and the celebration of the Vow of Louis XIII on 15 August retook their central place in Bourbon ideology. In his history of Paris Dulaure pointed to the weakness of the altar's composition: The Virgin is looking heavenward and does not seem to be aware of the gift proffered to her by Louis XIII. In Dulaure's words "nothing in this composition announces that the offering is accepted."²⁵⁵ In this way he expressed his doubts over the legitimacy of Bourbon rule.



58 An.: Fête de la Raison, le décadi 20 brumaire de l'an 2e de la République française. Etching, 9,5 x 15 cm. 1793. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

In 1820 Ingres received a commission to paint a *Vow of Louis XIII* for the cathedral of Montauban, his birthplace. The work was commissioned by a group of local and Parisian politicians and clergymen as a demonstration of

²⁵⁴ Lynn [Avery] Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 63-65.

²⁵⁵ "Rien, dans cette composition, n'annonce que l'offrande est acceptée." Dulaure, *Histoire physique, civile et morale de Paris*, vol. 2, 266.

their allegiance to the Bourbons and the latter's rule by divine right.²⁵⁶ I assume that there were quite a few Congrégation members among them. The painter was painfully aware of the compositional problems that he would have to face. At first he refused to paint a *Vow of Louis XIII* at all, because the combination of two separate events, the Vow and the Assumption of the Virgin, would violate the Classical law of unity.²⁵⁷ Ingres' refusal for artistic reasons reads almost like a polite reformulation of Dulaure's comment on the altar of Notre-Dame. He offered to paint an Assumption of the Virgin instead, which he considered a subject that could yield an important painting without any additions, but finally accepted to combine two events separated by 1600 years in one painting: *The Vow of Louis XIII putting the Kingdom of France under the Protection of the Holy Virgin at her Assumption*.



59 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: *Le Voeu de Louis XIII*. Oil on canvas. 424 x 263 cm. Salon of 1824. Montauban: Cathédrale Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption.

In the finished painting (ill. 59), which emulates Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*, we see Louis XIII, dressed in his coronation robes, kneeling before the Virgin and Child; he proffers his crown and sceptre to them. The Virgin and Child appear above him in a vision, hovering on clouds above an altar-like base, between curtains that are drawn aside by

²⁵⁶ See Carol Duncan, "Ingres's *Vow of Louis XIII* and the Politics of the Restoration," in Carol Duncan, *The Aesthetics of Power: Essays in Critical Art History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 57-68, for the genesis and political background of this painting.

²⁵⁷ Letter of M. de Balzac, prefect of Tarn-et-Garonne, dated 30 May 1821, cited in Norman Schlenoff, *Les sources littéraires de Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956), 142.

angels. The king's outstretched hands, holding crown and sceptre, reach towards the clouds that separate him from the Virgin. Heaven enters the space inhabited by the king in the shape of two winged putti who hold a stone plaque with an inscription that commemorates Louis XIII's vow. The king is depicted here as ruler by divine right, the intermediary between heaven and earth, whose piety enables us to behold this heavenly vision. Although Ingres tried to lessen the void between the king and the Virgin and Child by emphasising the king's role as intermediary, it remains tangible, though less so than in the altar of Notre-Dame. The Virgin and Child both look benignly but from a great height at the king; in this way they accentuate the distance between heaven and earth.

The Vow of Louis XIII brought Ingres instant fame when it was first exhibited at the Salon of 1824, more commissions from royalist circles, the membership of the Académie des beaux-arts and the cross of the Légion d'honneur. The painting itself was kept on display in Paris for two years after the Salon, before it finally journeyed to Montauban. For Ingres, opportunistic pandering to the needs of advocates of Bourbon legitimacy had proved a quick and sure road to success. His earlier works had not found great favour with the critics, and his pecuniary difficulties had already forced him to accept politically charged commissions that he loathed. *Henry IV receiving the Spanish ambassador* (ill. 15), ridiculed by Grandville in *Chasse nationale sur les terres royales* (ill. 14), was an earlier outcome of Ingres's survival strategy.²⁵⁸

The liberal opposition regarded Ingres's *Vow of Louis XIII*, the altar of Notre-Dame and the reinstatement of the Assumption Day procession as symbols of

²⁵⁸ Duncan, "Ingres's Vow of Louis XIII and the politics of the Restoration," 68-69.

Bourbon arrogance, absolutist aspirations and reliance on the bond between throne and altar.²⁵⁹ Delacroix's ire may have been prompted by the Bourbon symbolism of the painting but also by Ingres's successful opportunism; at the Salon of 1824, the success of *The Vow of Louis XIII* had overshadowed that of his own *Massacres at Chios*.

What may also have annoyed Delacroix was the bitter memory of a commission involving strict but changing instructions, that resembled the one received by Ingres. During the French Revolution the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus had been practised by the royalist rebels in the Vendée (ill. 32); during the Restoration it was again popular in Catholic ultra-royalist circles.²⁶⁰ In 1819 the Ministry of the Interior had ordered a *Virgin of the Sacred Heart* from Géricault for the *Chapelle du Sacré-Coeur* in the cathedral of Nantes. Géricault had passed the commission on to Delacroix; the painting, completed in 1821 (ill. 60), was sent back to Paris by the Diocese of Nantes in 1824. In 1827 the Ministry of the Interior sent it to the cathedral of Ajaccio on Corsica as a painting by Géricault; Delacroix did not even know what had become of his work. The title was also changed; it was now called *The Triumph of Religion*.

Like the two depictions of the Vow of Louis XIII that I have discussed, *The Virgin of the Sacred Heart* also fails to convincingly bring heaven and earth together. The smiling Virgin hovers on a cloud, surrounded by putti; with her

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 75-76.

²⁶⁰ This new popularity centred round a vow of highly contested authenticity, supposedly written in prison by Louis XVI only a couple of months before his execution. In words strongly resembling those of the Vow of Louis XIII, Louis XVI vowed himself, his country, and his subjects to the Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as an act of repentance for his laxity in fighting heresy (meaning every creed that threatened the stability of the Catholic church and the kingdom). For the history of the Cult of the Sacred Heart before and during the Restoration see Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 9-146.

left arm she supports the Cross, in her right hand she holds up the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is a powerful composition, complete in itself. Delacroix likely added the figures at the bottom of the painting later, at the wish of the Bishop of Nantes, to transform this depiction of the Virgin of the Sacred Heart into that of Our Lady of Sorrows.²⁶¹

60 Delacroix: The Virgin of the Sacred Heart. Oil on canvas. 258 x 152 cm. Ajaccio: Cathédrale de Notre-Dame de l'Assomption.



Grandville's caricature *Chasse nationale sur les terres royales* (ill. 14) comments on the contact between heaven and earth that both versions of the Vow of Louis XIII that I have discussed presuppose but are not able to express. Grandville depicts a void between Charles X and his former subjects, in which

²⁶¹ In a recent monograph on the *Virgin of the Sacred Heart*, Jean-Marc Idir gives a convincing account of the theological controversies within the Diocese of Nantes that caused this change of subject and the painting's ultimate rejection. Jean-Marc Idir, *Delacroix: Genèse d'un génie* (Paris: Cohen & Cohen, 2015). I thank him for his kind and elucidating answers to my e-mails concerning the genesis of the *Virgin of the Sacred Heart*.

the crown jewels are left to be picked up by the people, their rightful owners, instead of being offered to them or to heaven. The king is not even looking up to heaven for help and no help will come. Instead of the dove of the Holy Spirit, which was presumed to have brought down from heaven the phial containing the holy oil with which the French monarchs were anointed,²⁶² an ordinary pigeon is carrying a letter for the troops in Algiers. The French who have invaded the Royal Grounds are not looking up to heaven either; instead they are taking possession of their country.

In *Liberty Leading the People*, which depicts the preceding phase in the liberation of the French people, the barricade fighters are not yet aware of Liberty's presence. Yet there is no void between them and the goddess, who seems to be, like them, rooted in France's history and able to leave her animal form. The title of the painting indicates a unity of purpose of two great forces, Liberty and the People, while the title *Vow of Louis XIII*, nor the compositions of Ingres's painting and Louis XIV's altarpiece, indicate the presence of the Virgin on earth, or her willingness to interfere in French history on behalf of the Bourbons. In *Liberty Leading the People*, 28 July, the day on which the Goddess of Liberty joined the People, becomes a date of equal or even greater importance than 15 August.

In Delacroix's painting we see no king who acts as the intermediary between the people and a static, remote, supernatural power. Instead a poor, dying mole, a sewer worker by profession, dressed in clothes that show the blue, red and white of the tricolour, takes the place of the king in *The Vow of Louis XIII*. He turns his blind face to the July sun that brings life and liberty, and

²⁶² Duncan, "Ingres's Vow of Louis XIII and the Politics of the Restoration," 74.

to the heathen universal goddess who rushes forward. She has come to the aid of the French; their barricade is her altar. Instead of the Cross she carries a bayonet, instead of the Sacred Heart a tricolour.²⁶³ If she is a mother, her children are the two gamins de Paris, the Children of the Nation. The barricade fighters of Paris and Nantes are ordinary people; they act out of necessity to survive and to gain the liberty that will enable them to pledge loyalty to their own ideals and beliefs, their city and their country. They do not need the intervention of a king who pretends to have been placed above them by God. Their examples were the boatmen of Paris in the city's earliest history, the men who took an oath of loyalty during the Fête de la Fédération, and the deputies of the Third Estate, Abbé Sieyès, the priest or mole among them, with their Tennis Court Oath of 1789, a "solemn oath not to separate, and to reassemble whenever circumstances require, until the constitution of the kingdom is established."²⁶⁴

²⁶³ See f.i. Rohlmann, "Delacroix' *Liberté*: Die Erlösung der Bilder," 231.

²⁶⁴ Sieyès's early biographers assumed that he was the main author, but his exact role remains unclear. Bastid, *Sieyès et sa pensée*, 67.

Slain Enemies

After this description and explication of the barricade fighters and their positive connotations of patriotism, political and religious liberty, valour, chivalry and righteous revenge, I will now turn my attention to the three men lying on the pavement at the foot of the barricade. The barricade fighters are in a transitory state between animal and human being; they express the transformation of the French from people bestial into free, proud human beings, the in-between stage that is implied in caricatures by Grandville created before and after the July Revolution. In a caricature by Grandville from August 1830 (ill. 14), Charles X, his relatives and courtiers are descending to an animal state. The dead men in the foreground of the painting can be interpreted as beings undergoing a transformation from humans into animals, just like the Bourbons. These animals are the monsters mentioned in Psalm 91, a lion, a dragon and a serpent.

The three young men are literally *sur les pavées*, out on the street, thrown out on their ears, just like the workers who turned into barricade fighters during the July Days. They lie dead or dying in this stone desert, for ever tied to it; under the scorching heat of the July sun they change into monsters, while the barricade fighters thrive. They are tied to the reality of the street war of July 1830 and to that of the conquest of Algeria. The natural habitat of the lion and the serpent is not the lush forest but the desert, where the French people fought a victory only weeks before the July Revolution.

The two young soldiers in the bottom right of the painting, who lie at the feet of Liberty and the gamin de Paris, still dressed in their magnificent uniforms of Swiss and French Royal Guardsmen, are even in death far more handsome than the barricade fighters. All three men have shaved and seem to have

recently visited a hairdresser; they are not representatives of Hairy Gaul but of its “civilised” Frankish oppressors. As a sign of their humiliation these pleasing monsters have all lost their headgear.

As I have already indicated in the chapter *La Curée*, these three men also represent the dandies, the heroes of the Boulevard de Gand, the civil servants, journalists and critics who, according to Delacroix’s essay “Des critiques en matière d’art” of 1829, ruled the art world like lions and dragons, and who struck artists down with the serpentine line of beauty. In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix painted them as corpses, as if killing them off in this way would prevent their job hunt after the July Revolution. Two male types of dandy are represented here, a *lion* and a *gant jaune*, and one female, a *bas bleu*, but we will also see a *rodomont*, an example of military vanity, a *calicot*, an example of lower-class vanity, and a *pékin*, an incompetent civilian.



61 Delacroix: *Liberty Leading the People*, detail.

The Swiss Guard (a Lion?)

The Swiss Guardsman (ill. 61) wears the blue-grey uniform coat of the *voltigeurs*.²⁶⁵ He is lying on his back; his head has fallen to one side and his clothing is in disarray. His cartridge pouch seems to have been picked up by the *gamin de Paris* directly above him, and he has lost his right boot and stocking. His shako lies on the pavement in front of him. He seems to have been a sturdy man who did not possess the nimbleness of the French *voltigeur*; his heavy uniform coat must have bothered him when he was fighting in the July heat.



62 Bertel Thorvaldsen: *The Lion of Lucerne*.

For many hundreds of years, the Swiss Guards had served the French kings loyally; the epitome of their devotion was the defence of the royal family against a revolutionary mob that stormed the Tuileries palace on 10 August

²⁶⁵ Toussaint, “*La Liberté guidant le peuple*” de Delacroix, 51.

1792. Many Swiss soldiers were butchered by the infuriated mob during and after their heroic defence of the palace, which gave the royal family time to escape. Their self-sacrifice is commemorated in the *Lion of Lucerne*, the monumental dying lion (ill. 62), designed by Bertel Thorvaldsen, which was carved in a cliff face in Lucerne in 1820-1821. On 29 July 1830, the last day of the July Revolution, the Swiss Guards, many of whom had lost relatives on 10 August 1792, again had to defend the Louvre and the Tuileries against insurgents. Their commanding officer, Colonel De Salis, afraid that he and his men would suffer the same fate as the Swiss Guards of 1792, left his post in a panic, followed by his subordinates. The disorderly and unsoldierly retreat of the Swiss Guards had a demoralising effect; it was followed within a few hours by the evacuation of all royal troops from Paris.²⁶⁶



63 Delacroix: *Liberty Leading the People*, detail.

The Swiss Guard in *Liberty Leading the People* bears a resemblance to a dead or dying lion; his blond hair and moustache encircle his face like a lion's mane and whiskers, and his nearly closed eyes slant slightly, like those of a lion; his mouth is partly open, with teeth showing (ill. 63). Delacroix deliberately leaves us in doubt about the way he died: has he *laissé ses bottes* in the streets of Paris (left his boots there, meaning died in battle there), or has he been shot while taking flight with *un pied chaussé et l'autre nu* (on one shoe and one bare foot, meaning in a great hurry). Although we see both his feet, this soldier's arms and hands are invisible; since *bras* (arm) and *main* (hand) stand for military strength and

²⁶⁶ Munro Price, *The Perilous Crown: France between Revolutions* (London: Macmillan, 2007; London: Pan Books, 2013), 158-60.

fighting spirit, we must conclude that he has lost both, and that he was so surprised by the rebellion of small, insignificant creatures that he was unable to react. *Les bras m'en tombent* means I am so surprised that my arms fall off. His slanting eyes also point to military incompetence; during the Napoleonic Empire French soldiers began to use the pejorative name *pékin* (Pekingese or Chinese) for civilians with no knowledge of the military profession.²⁶⁷

This huge lion now lies dead at the feet of the gamin de Paris, a small, agile squirrel. A Hercules who does not look the part has killed the Nemean lion. Without the subtitles that Charlet needed in *L'Allocution* (ill. 4) we can guess that the word that this embodiment of the Napoleonic soldier is shouting is *pékin*; this is a word that Eugène Delacroix may have heard his brother and other soldiers use hundreds of times. The Swiss Guard's shako has rolled away, and it lies with its opening towards the viewer, almost as if it asks him to pick it up and put it on his head; but of course, no true patriot will put on a mercenary's shako. The shako is likely also an empty purse that desperately needs to be filled; the Bourbons, who maintained the Swiss Guard, have gone and will no longer pay. Therefore, the Swiss will have to find new employment, but without payment they will not fight. *Pas d'argent, point de Suisse* (no money, no Swiss).

The type of dandy that this dead Swiss soldier likely represents is a *lion*. A lion was a person who excited public curiosity, just like the lions in the Tower of London. His or her fame was always of short duration, but while it lasted it opened every door, because people wanted to be seen with this celebrity. Explorers and mountaineers, but also artists and writers could become lions,

²⁶⁷ Susan Hiner, "Monsieur Calicot: French Masculinity between Commerce and Honor," *West 86th* 19, no. 1 (2012): 32-60, esp. 43-44.

but often it was enough to be a foreigner with exotic habits to become one. Lord Byron's poem *Don Juan* (published over the period 1819-1824) is a likely source for Delacroix's knowledge of the lion as a type of dandy. In the fifth *Canto*, published in 1821, Byron blames bluestockings for the end of his fame as a lion when the first *Cantos* (published in 1819) were criticised (by these women, he seems to imply) for their immorality: "That taste is gone – that fame is but a lottery, Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie."²⁶⁸

Against this background, the burly, blond Swiss Guard, who can't be mistaken for a Frenchman, could be described as a two-faced monster. He is at once a Swiss/Chinese lion, an impressive, presumably brave, very exotic foreigner, and a mercenary who personifies Bourbon military incompetence by forgetting his most important duties and running away from danger like a civilian, a pékin. Delacroix also seems to imply that critics and journalists, the heroes of the Boulevard de Gand who, together with their female counterpart the *bas bleu*, could make or break an artist's reputation overnight, are pékins without knowledge of the artist's *métier*. When an artist becomes, if only for a short while, their lion, he cannot afford to scorn their favour, even when they demand to be paid for their services as if they were the mercenaries of artistic fame. When the critics turn against the tame lion whom they have protected only the day before, they in their turn change into lions who want to taste his blood.

²⁶⁸ George Clinton, *The Life and Writings of Lord Byron* (London: Robins, 1825), 574. *Don Juan* was available to the French public through Amédée Pichot's prose translation.



64 Delacroix: Liberty Leading the People, detail.

The Cuirassier (a Dragon?)

In the lower right corner of the painting we see a French cuirassier of the Royal Guard who lies dead with his face in his own blood; he died of a wound to his head (ill. 64). In contrast to the dead cuirassier in Gros's *Battlefield at Eylau* (ill. 19) he has lost his helmet, but he still wears his gloves. We see only the cuirassier's upper body and not his legs; these seem to have been cut off by the painting's frame. He must have been just as surprised as the Swiss Guard; instead of *les bras m'en tombent* the expression *les jambes m'en tombent* (this makes my legs fall off) is also used. Together, the Swiss and the French soldier have lost arms and legs. *Couper bras et jambes à quelqu'un* (cutting off a person's arms and legs) means robbing a person of the means to act or of his courage. Their stupefaction, lack of battle experience, lack of courage, plus their incompetent superiors caused the defeat of these soldiers. During the Napoleonic era, the cuirassiers, heavy cavalry who specialised in mass charges, had been one of the great prides of the French army.²⁶⁹ Cuirassiers were big

²⁶⁹ Elting, *Swords Around a Throne*, 229-30.

men on big horses, who looked like knights in armour with their shining cuirasses, spotless white gloves and helmets *à la Minerve*; these helmets had distinctive forward curving crests and long black waving horsehair manes (ill. 65). The last great charge of Napoleon’s cuirassiers was that of Waterloo, where they were led by Marshal Ney. In Barthélemy and Méry’s highly popular anti-government poem *Waterloo* of 1829,²⁷⁰ these cuirassiers were described as “heavy centaurs with gigantic flanks, with iron heads and sparking feet.”²⁷¹

65 Cuirassier of 1809. Illustration from *Collection des types de tous les corps et des uniformes militaires [...] d’après les dessins de M. Hippolyte Bellangé*. Paris: Dubochet, 1844.



Accounts of the July Revolution contain many descriptions of the cruelty shown by the cuirassiers, especially those of the Royal Guard. One of the most horrific examples was their charge in the Rue Saint-Antoine on 28 July. While most people ran for shelter, a young man who was carrying a tricolour stood alone in the middle of the street. “With a self-devotion, which was worthy of a better fate, he deliberately planted his three-coloured ensign in the ground and remained beside it unmoved. [...] But the cuirassiers of the guard were not to be moved by the heroism of the gallant standard-bearer. He was instantly sabred and cut down at the post of honour he had chosen; and, after depriving him of life, the

²⁷⁰ The poem attacked General Bourmont, the newly appointed minister of war, who had betrayed Napoleon at Waterloo and who had testified against Marshal Ney when the latter stood on trial for treason in late 1815. [Auguste-Marseille] Barthélemy and [Joseph] Méry, *Waterloo: Au général Bourmont* (Paris: Denain, 1829), 5. In 1830 Bourmont commanded the French army in Algeria.

²⁷¹ “Ces centaures massifs, aux gigantesques flancs,
A la tête de fer, aux pieds étincelans...” Barthélemy and Méry, *Waterloo*, 26.

soldiers took a horrible pleasure in treading his dead body under the feet of their horses.”²⁷² While Napoleon’s cuirassiers had defended the tricolour during the great battles of the Napoleonic era, those serving the Bourbons trampled both the flag and the unarmed man who had just planted it in the soil of Paris. Fifteen years after the end of the Napoleonic wars Delacroix’s Royal Guardsman is a coward and a *rodomont*, a soldier who brags about his bravery and about heroic acts that never took place.²⁷³ The name rodomont for a bragging soldier was taken from Rodomont, in *Roland Furieux* the aggressive, cruel and impulsive king of Algiers whose body, but not his head, is always protected by his cuirass of impenetrable dragon skin.²⁷⁴ When he besieges Paris, the loss of many of his soldiers so enrages him that he jumps over the city’s walls and moat to slaughter the inhabitants. He does not spare children, women or old people, and none of his victims dare look into his face.²⁷⁵

The Royal Guard in *Liberty Leading the People*, a rodomont with little or no battle experience, whose merciless killing of unarmed people resembles Charles X’s cruel hunting of small creatures, lies dead now with his terrible face in his own blood. He is defeated by the barricade fighters of Paris, these heroes from *Roland Furieux*. Perhaps they simply threw a heavy piece of furniture at the dragon’s head from an upper window of one of the tall houses in the Rue Saint-Antoine (ill. 7). In Algeria, French heroes had defeated the Turkish Dey of Algiers, that other rodomont, who had besmirched French honour by slapping

²⁷² David Turnbull, *The French Revolution of 1830: The Events which Produced it and the Scenes by which it was Accompanied* (London: Coleburn and Buntly, 1830), 96. Turnbull’s source for this story of merciless cruelty was Étienne-Léon de Lamoignon’s *Une semaine de l’histoire de Paris: Dédié aux Parisiens* (Stuttgart: Hoffmann, 1830), 146.

²⁷³ Gaigne, *Nouveau dictionnaire militaire...*, 565. See also Kress, *The Orlando Legend in Nineteenth-Century French Literature*, 14.

²⁷⁴ Comte Louis-Élisabeth de Tressan, *Roland Furieux*, vol. 4 of *Oeuvres choisies* (Evreux: Ancelle, 1796), 337, 404.

²⁷⁵ Tressan, *Roland Furieux*, 448-49.

the French ambassador. The cuirassier with his impressive moustache recalls the mounted Turkish officer in the *Massacres at Chios* (ill. 66); he kills off his apathetic victims, who do not even look at him to beg for mercy.

66 Delacroix: *The Massacres at Chios*. Oil on canvas. 417 x 354 cm. Salon of 1824. Paris: Musée du Louvre.



Delacroix may have copied the cuirassier from a portrait of a *Carabineer and his Horse* (1814-15; ill. 67) that he had seen in Géricault's studio in 1823.²⁷⁶ Géricault painted the portrait of an able imperial soldier in peacetime, whose purpose in life seems to have been taken from him. In contrast to the

²⁷⁶ Marrinan, *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe*, 72; Delacroix, *Journal*, vol. 1, 110.



independent-minded horse of the *Charging Officer of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval of the Imperial Guard* of 1812 (ill. 37), his horse is a docile background shadow.²⁷⁷

Delacroix created a figure who is not only a rodomont and a slain dragon but also a dandy. The colour of his gloves is not regulation white but yellowish; this colour contrasts with his white epaulette. He is a *gant jaune* (yellow glove); the name *gant jaune* for dandy was based on the early nineteenth-century British and French craze for gloves in every shade of yellow, from light sand to bright yellow.²⁷⁸ The critics, those watchful dragons who, according to Delacroix, stood between the artists and the viewers, could afford to wear yellow gloves. They did not have to dirty their hands; in contrast artists would go gloveless for most of the day.

The dead cuirassier has lost his helmet and his horse; when we want to know where they are, we must return to the image of the centaur that Barthélemy and Méry used in their evocation of Ney's cuirassiers at Waterloo. By cutting the cuirassier in half Delacroix has separated the horse from its rider; he seems to have, like Maugis, freed Bayard from the dragon who had imprisoned him. By doing this he has also deprived his rider of all his strength and acting power. Only the soldier's upper body and his head are left, his dragon half; I think it very likely that his horse has joined the barricade fighters.

²⁷⁷ Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Théodore Géricault* (London: Phaidon, 2010), 45.

²⁷⁸ Octave Uzanne, *L'ombrelle, le gant, le manchon* (Paris: Quantin, 1883), 91.

If this is the case, a horse who had served as an instrument of tyranny, having lost the recalcitrance of the one that Géricault portrayed in his *Charging Officer of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval of the Imperial Guard* (ill. 37), now becomes a goddess who personifies love of liberty, and whose nature it is to change from a horse into a woman. The strong reaction of the horse of the Royal Guardsmen in the right background of *Liberty Leading the People*, white like that of Géricault's *Charging Officer of the Chasseurs-à-Cheval of the Imperial Guard*, suggests that it wants to follow her example and liberate itself from its enslaved existence.

The horse that is now free has likely completed its metamorphosis into the Goddess of Liberty by picking up its former master's feminine-looking helmet à la Minerve with its long mane that cascaded down his back, and transforming it into a liberty cap. The cap's forward-curving tip resembles the crest of the helmet and the flowing tricolour has taken the place of the mane. Liberty seems to have taken over the task of standard-bearer of the July Revolution from the young man in the Rue Saint-Antoine who was trampled by the horses of the cuirassiers; her uncovered upper body makes her just as vulnerable as he was.

When he was still a schoolboy, Delacroix used the margins and empty pages of his exercise books for sketching. On one page he drew liberty caps in combination with crested helmets, whose shapes resemble those of the caps (ill. 68). In the middle of this page he portrayed a man wearing a long, military style overcoat, who carries a letter and who walks with a stick because his right leg gives him trouble. This may be a realistic portrayal of Charles-Henry's disability, and as far as I know the only one.²⁷⁹ His military file contains the

²⁷⁹ Illustration 40 in René Huyghe, *Delacroix: ou le combat solitaire* (Paris: Hachette, 1964). According to Huyghe the exercise book itself dates from around 1812; the portrait of Charles-Henry has to date from July 1814, when he returned from Russia, or later.

staggering number of letters that he had to write to get his pension. Because it



68 Delacroix: Page of sketches in a school exercise book. Private Collection.

testifies to his brother's troubles, this drawing may have held great personal significance for Delacroix.

The horse who seems to have been liberated from the dragon who enslaved him, to change into the Goddess of Liberty, can be associated with Delacroix's most intimate drawings and emotions. The uninitiated viewers of 1831 cannot have known this, but some of them may have understood the way in which the cuirassier or dragon and the transformation of his horse comment on

a painting by Ingres.

Delacroix connected *Roland Furieux* with the valour of Napoleonic officers, so that it may have seemed to him as if the Bourbons had seized the book for their own purposes when in 1817, they decided to commission a painting by Ingres with a subject from *Roland Furieux* for the redecoration of the Throne Room of Versailles. This initiative was part of a short-lived scheme to restore the palace's function as a royal residence, which it had lost during the French Revolution.

Ingres chose to paint *Roger Freeing Angelica* (ill. 69); Roger was an unfortunate choice for the part of heroic saviour because he did not want to save Angelica

from the Orc that kept her imprisoned to liberate her, but to ravish her.²⁸⁰ In Ingres's painting Roger's armoured leg cuts his monstrous steed, a hippogriff with the body of a horse, the head of an eagle and lion claws, into two separate beings, a horse and a hybrid monster. In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix seems to have completed the separation of the noble horse from both this monster and his armour-clad rider and set it free.



69 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: Roger Freeing Angelica. Oil on canvas. 190 x 147 cm. Salon of 1819. Paris: Musée du Louvre.

²⁸⁰ Susan L. Siegfried, "Ingres's Reading: The Undoing of Narrative," *Art History* 23, no. 5 (December 2000): 654-80.



70 Delacroix: Liberty Leading the People, detail.

The Man in the White Shirt (a Serpent?)

The corpse in the left foreground is perhaps the most disturbing figure in the whole painting. Again, Delacroix ridicules critics and civil servants; this one figure also expresses all his hatred of the Bourbons and their entourage. For this he used every disturbing aspect of their recent history, from the birth of the Miracle Child and Bourbon infertility to the way in which one of them, the duchesse de Berry, had treated him.

A young man with a fashionable curly haircut and a small, almost invisible moustache lies dead on his back on the pavement, with his feet resting on the stones of the barricade; his right arm lies outstretched and his left arm is invisible (ill. 70). He has died of wounds to his right side and his head. Next to his head lies a single slipper. Since he is only dressed in a white, blood-stained shirt and one blue stocking that has worn thin at the toes he looks as if he has been surprised in his sleep; having lost everything he literally had to take flight in his shirt, on one stocking and one bare foot. *Être mis en chemise* means being stripped to one's shirt, being ruined. His long, wiry legs and skinny buttocks are visible; his pubic hair is indicated, but not his genitals; one nipple on his hairless, puny chest shows through his shirt opening. Liberty, the only female figure in the painting, possesses the strength of a stallion, but this man was

weak. His corpse is already blue with decay and he is literally a sans-culotte in the original pejorative sense of this word which dates from the ancien régime: he has lost both his male and aristocratic dignity.²⁸¹

His small moustache, a feeble imitation of Revolutionary and Napoleonic soldiers' impressive moustaches, is an attempt to give himself a virile, military air. This and the white shirt that he wears likely point to the type of dandy that he represents, the *calicot*. During the Restoration this was the best-known type of civilian dandy who adopted a military style. Even dead and deprived of their strength, the two soldiers on the right possess the virility that the calicot was desperate to acquire, and that the barricade fighters have acquired now that they have taken up arms to fight for their livelihood, their honour, their country and their liberty.



71 Delacroix: *Le retour de Calicot ou les Calicots n'ont pas fait baisser la toile.* Etching. 1817. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Calicots were named after calico, a cheap white or unbleached quality of cotton; they were junior salesmen in fabric and ladies' fashions shops who almost collectively assumed a military air. During the early years of his career Delacroix created a caricature of a calicot, complete with moustache and fashionable haircut, who is changing into an ass. Here the calicot represents false modernism, bad judgement and bad taste (of critics and

²⁸¹ Christine Bard, *Une histoire politique du pantalon* (Paris: Seuil, 2010), 30, 123.

other intellectuals I presume).²⁸² He works in a shop called *In the Judgement of Midas* (ill. 71); real pékin (Chinese silk) is one of the fabrics that this shop sells.

The dead young man in *Liberty Leading the People* seems to be transforming from a human being into a serpent; his transformation resembles that of France's elegant prime minister Jules de Polignac in Grandville's *Chasse nationale sur les terres royales* (ill. 14). The skin that the serpent has almost completely shed was his old-fashioned court costume to which his culotte belonged. In contrast to the outcast lone wolf with the black top hat who towers above him, he wore clothes that marked him as a member of a narrowly defined social group that disappeared with the July Revolution. The small, elegant sword that one of the barricade fighters, the *voltigeur*, now holds, may have belonged to this court costume, but also to the uniform of the usually conservative members of the *Académie Française* and *Académie des beaux-arts*.

Since Polignac was reputedly Charles X's illegitimate son,²⁸³ the young man in the white shirt represents not only Polignac, his cabinet and the court, but also Charles X and the Bourbon dynasty. He certainly seems to have inherited Charles X's long, lean body and legs (ill. 14) and his propensity to take flight in the face of danger. This propensity was ridiculed by Béranger in the song *Histoire de Charles X* that describes the life of the king as a series of cowardly flights. According to this song Charles had displayed his cowardice in 1789, when he fled France without lifting a finger to help his brother Louis XVI; in 1830 it caused his ignominious flight to Great-Britain.²⁸⁴ The young man's side wound resembles that of the duc de Berry, who was stabbed in his right side

²⁸² See also Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Eugène Delacroix*, 140-41.

²⁸³ Cabanis, *Charles X*, 400.

²⁸⁴ [Pierre-Jean de Béranger], *Vie de Charles X mêlée de couplets: Suivie d'anecdotes tres-curieuses sur l'ex-roi de France*, deuxième édition, revue et augmentée (Paris: Gauthier, 1830), 14-15.

by his murderer Louvel. He lies dead in his white shirt, as an obscene comment on prints of Berry on his deathbed (ill. 6).²⁸⁵ Royalist pamphleteers had always made the most of the duke's side wound; they compared his sufferings to those of Christ.²⁸⁶

The *voltigeur*, who crouches on the stones of the barricade above this serpent, seems to be shedding his skin to change from a lizard or salamander into a warm-blooded human being; as if he is Apollo killing Python, he clenches a stone to kill a serpent, but this one is already dead. A small, insignificant animal represents the noble, chivalrous, art-loving ideal of kingship of Francis I, which contrasts strongly with Charles X's cowardice; the courtier's and Academician's sword is now justly his. A rhyme composed during his lifetime in memory of his military victories describes Francis I as the salamander whose fire killed three animals far bigger than himself: the bear (Switzerland), the eagle (Austria), and the serpent (the city of Milan, after the serpent in its coat of arms).²⁸⁷

During the Restoration opponents of the Bourbon government nicknamed the returned émigrés who entered France's armed forces as officers without any military experience *voltigeurs de Louis XIV*.²⁸⁸ Delacroix seems to imply that their nimbleness did not resemble that of the intrepid small squirrel and salamander/lizard, these *voltigeurs* of the barricades, but that of snakes who slid into important positions where they undermined the fighting spirit of the French armed forces.

²⁸⁵ Christine de Buzon, *Henri V, comte de Chambord: Ou le "fier suicide" de la Royauté* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1987), 14.

²⁸⁶ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Eugène Delacroix*, 50.

²⁸⁷ "L'ours fier, l'aigle légère et le serpent tortu,

Salamandre, ont cédé a ton feu et vertu," cited f.i. in Jean-Toussaint Merle, *Chambord* (Paris: Canel, Guyot, 1832), 52.

²⁸⁸ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Eugène Delacroix*, 34.



72 Jacques-Louis David:
Academic study called Hector.
Oil on canvas. 123 x 172 cm.
1778. Montpellier: Musée
Fabre.

Toussaint compares the man in the white shirt with academic studies of the corpse of the Trojan hero Hector, especially

that by Jacques-Louis David of 1778 (ill. 72); Delacroix may have seen the *Hector* when it was part of a paying exhibition of works by David in the Rue de Richelieu in Paris in 1824.²⁸⁹ The outstretched legs and elegantly crossed feet of David's *Hector* rest on a rock; he looks as if he has fallen asleep on his mantle. His genitals are covered and emphasised by a tip of this mantle, and his face is still suntanned. Because he is loved by the gods, the corpse of this hero will not decay.

A hero such as Francis I could still claim the Trojans as his ancestors without looking completely ridiculous.²⁹⁰ Delacroix seems to imply that the Bourbon monarchy of 1830 has so drastically degenerated that even its symbolic representation in *Liberty Leading the People* is only a weak, obscene, effeminate imitation of David's portrayal of its heroic mythical forefather.

²⁸⁹ Toussaint, "*La Liberté guidant le peuple*" de Delacroix, 50. For the exhibition see f.i. Louis Hautecoeur, *Louis David* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1954), 273.

²⁹⁰ During the reign of Francis I, the mythical Trojan ancestry of the house of Valois was used for propaganda purposes, but most authors of this period do not seem to have believed in a real genealogical connexion between France's kings and the Trojan heroes. Marian Rothstein, "Homer for the Court of François I," *Renaissance Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 732-67, esp. 735.



73 Théodore Géricault: *The Raft of the Medusa*, detail.

The serpent also recalls two of the corpses in Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* (Salon of 1819). One of them is completely, and humiliatingly, naked but for his white stockings; he lies on his back with his legs spread and his genitals in full view, but just like David's *Hector*, this corpse has retained its masculinity. The legs of the other corpse are bare, his upper body and face are covered by a white, shroud-like piece of cloth (ill. 73). In Delacroix's painting, the Bourbons instead of their victims seem to be humiliated: the serpent both defies and obeys La Rochefoucauld's command to cover "offensive" nudes, but compared with the nudity of David's *Hector* and the corpses in *The Raft of the Medusa*, that of the puny serpent with his hidden genitals is far more offensive.

During the Restoration, several painters had alluded in their works to the birth of the desperately needed Bourbon male heir, the Miracle Child, in 1820. In Ingres' *Vow of Louis XIII* (ill. 59) the Virgin shows Christ to the king with his genitals visible, almost as if Christ is the desperately needed male heir to the throne. Eugène Delacroix's *Birth of Henry IV* (ill. 74) commemorates the birth of the founder of the Bourbon monarchy, but the work can be understood as a homage to the Miracle Child, who was also called Henri.²⁹¹ The painting, first shown at the Salon of 1827, found great favour with the critics and the public,

²⁹¹ Albert Boime, *Art in an Age of Counterrevolution: 1815-1848* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 223-24.

and it was immediately acquired for the royal collection. With this work Devéria took over the position of leader of the Romantic school from Delacroix, who had contributed the much-criticised *Death of Sardanapalus*.²⁹² Devéria's painting shows the newly born baby being held up with his lower body uncovered to enable all scrutinising witnesses to ascertain that the child is a boy.



74 Eugène Devéria: *The Birth of Henri IV*. Oil on canvas. 484 x 392 cm. Salon de 1827. Paris: Musée du Louvre.

Both Ingres's and Devéria's painting refer to a royal tradition that was scrupulously followed when the Miracle Child was born. Since the longed-for prince was born nearly eight months after his father's death, opponents of the Bourbons could easily spread doubt concerning the reality of the

pregnancy of the duchesse de Berry. For this reason, the customary presence of witnesses at the birth was of the utmost importance to the Bourbons. As the duchess gave birth in the middle of the night, apparently after having been in labour only a couple of minutes, both the doctor and the official witnesses came too late. It was then decided to call in four National Guardsmen, ordinary shopkeepers and employees who stood guard outside the palace door, to act as witnesses. Rumour had it that when these men entered the duchess's bedroom,

²⁹² Fraser, *Delacroix: Art and Patrimony in Post-Revolutionary France*, 118.

they saw her lying on her bed with the baby next to her and the lower part of her body exposed, so that they were able to establish that the child was a boy and that it was still attached to its mother. In 1830, the shockingly immodest way in which royal tradition was believed to have been maintained at this occasion and doubts concerning the reality of the duchess's pregnancy still kept pamphlet writers busy.²⁹³

The dead young man in *Liberty Leading the People* may be understood not only as a comment on the death of the duc de Berry but also on the immodesty of his widow; the lower part of his snake body can be female as well as male. Delacroix also seems to satirise the slavish and prurient works of his competitors Devéria and Ingres, which upheld the Bourbon claim that an heir to the throne had been born.

During Delacroix's lifetime the theory of spontaneous generation still had its defenders in France. According to this theory some life forms, including snakes, could arise from inanimate matter or dead, putrid organisms.²⁹⁴ In *Liberty Leading the People* one serpent represents the whole Bourbon royal family. This seems to imply that the birth of the Miracle Child could be explained by an anomalous manner of procreation that was, like the reputedly blue colour of their blood, exclusive to the august Bourbons. When she would but look down, Liberty would be able to assert that this limp, androgynous serpent body has

²⁹³ Jo Burr Margadant, "The Duchesse de Berry and Royalist Political Culture in Postrevolutionary France," *History Workshop Journal* 43 (1997): 23-52, esp. 31-33.

²⁹⁴ One of the defenders of this theory during Delacroix's youth was the biologist Lamarck. For a short history of this originally Aristotelean idea see the treatise of one of its last defenders in France F[élix] A[rchimède] Pouchet, *Hétérogénie: ou Traité de la génération spontanée, basé sur de nouvelles expériences* (Paris: Baillière, 1859), 1-94.

lost the power to procreate in the normal way,²⁹⁵ but she looks right over this nonentity.

Like its immodest nudity, the one threadbare blue stocking that the serpent still wears seems to allude to the duchesse de Berry. Although her political views resembled those of her father-in-law Charles X, she collected modern art and protected modern literature and theatre, plus a fashion magazine. She owned one of the most admired private libraries in France as well as a famous collection of natural specimens.²⁹⁶ In 1829 she had favoured Delacroix with a commission for a history painting, *The Battle of Poitiers*, but she had gone into exile without paying for it. While he was working on *Liberty Leading the People* the first of several auctions of the duchess's possessions took place in Paris, and Delacroix was desperately trying to get his money from the duchess's agents; he needed it to cover his expenses for *Liberty Leading the People*. Most likely she didn't pay,²⁹⁷ and Delacroix revenged himself by depicting a worn blue stocking as the remnant of the fashionable intellectual activities of a woman who apparently could not pay the bills for them anymore.²⁹⁸

The serpent-like young man recalls the grass snake in Colbert's coat of arms, but in *Liberty Leading the People* Fouquet, the small squirrel, has won instead of the king and his scheming courtiers. The azure of Colbert's snake (ill. 27) has faded to a bluish white corpse colour. This bluish, decaying snake body suggests that the Bourbon Restoration was a corpse warmed over, the

²⁹⁵ X-rays of the painting have revealed that the Goddess of Liberty was originally looking down, but that Delacroix later changed the position of her head. Toussaint, "*La Liberté guidant le peuple*" de Delacroix, 70.

²⁹⁶ Philip Mansel, "The Duchesse de Berry and the Aesthetics of Royalism: Dynastic Collecting in Nineteenth-Century France," in *Women Patrons and Collectors*, edited by Susan Bracken, Andrea M. Galdy and Adriana Turpin (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 139-52.

²⁹⁷ Hadjinicolaou, "*La Liberté guidant le peuple* de Delacroix devant son premier public," 9.

²⁹⁸ Delacroix uses the term *bas bleu* in 1822, in his letter to Pierret, for Lisette, the girl who he also compares to a huntress from Antiquity. Delacroix, *Correspondance générale*, vol. 1, 144.

resurrected remnant of a blue-blooded dynasty which had been killed by the French Revolution.²⁹⁹ The small blind mole, a sewer worker by profession, who is aware of the presence of Liberty before the other barricade fighters, first had to free himself from under this putrid mass. It will now be reburied in a mass grave and remain buried forever. Unlike Christ, with whose martyrdom the Bourbons compared their own sufferings, they will not be resurrected; in contrast to the Virgin Mary of the Notre-Dame altar, the Goddess of Liberty will not raise and cradle their corpse.

I have now come to the end of my description of the monstrous slain enemies of the July Revolution. These enemies are the Bourbons, their servants, the artists who successfully exploited Bourbon piety and arrogance, and the mediocre, dandyish intellectuals who reaped the rewards of the July Revolution. Delacroix killed and maimed these monsters in his own way, that of an artist. By simply not painting their arms, legs and genitals he robbed them of their virility and acting power. By cutting a soldier's body in half with the painting's frame he liberated a horse so that it could transform into a Goddess of Liberty. The act of painting *Liberty Leading the People* was a hand-to-hand fight, a heroic charge, a second Eylau, an artistic revolution, and a victory signed in the artist's own blood.

Delacroix created a painting with a limited number of figures, all of them convincing renditions of barricade fighters, dead soldiers and civilian victims who could be seen on the barricades in July 1830. Both their realism and their multi-layered significance separate these allegorical figures from the unequivocal allegories that conservative defenders of allegory wished to see.

²⁹⁹ For Delacroix's preoccupation with "the life and death of the royal body" in *Sardanapalus* see Fraser, *Delacroix: Art and Patrimony in Post-Revolutionary France*, 115-57.

Delacroix set his public to work; it had to make sense of the painting's historical, linguistic, literary and artistic allusions, both personally and collectively.

In the next chapter I will discuss the relationship between *Liberty Leading the People* and one of the most important French seventeenth-century history paintings, Nicolas Poussin's *Gathering of the Manna*, and return to the relationship between Delacroix's painting and Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*. I will focus on the shared theme of these three paintings, that of a reversal of fate, and on similarities in their compositions. By referring to a theme already famously interpreted by Poussin, Delacroix placed *Liberty Leading the People* and *The Raft of the Medusa* in the Classical French tradition of history painting.

Delacroix, Poussin and Géricault

Delacroix expressed his interest in the works of Poussin several times in his diary during the spring of 1824, when he was working on the *Massacres at Chios*.³⁰⁰ The most famous of Poussin's paintings in the Louvre is *The Gathering of the Manna* (1637-38, ill. 75). It depicts an episode from the Biblical Book of Exodus according to which the Israelites, having escaped from Egyptian slavery and led by Moses, travel through the desert for forty years. Starving, they are nourished by manna, food that miraculously rains down from heaven.



75 Nicolas Poussin. *The Gathering of the Manna*. Oil on canvas. 149 x 200 cm. 1637-1639. Paris: Musée du Louvre.

The painting, which entered the French royal collection in 1666, was described by Poussin himself as follows: “I have invented (...) a certain distribution of parts, and certain natural accidents, which display the misery and famine to which the people of Israel were reduced, and also their subsequent joy and

³⁰⁰ On 30 March for instance, he describes a visit to the Louvre where he admired Poussin's paintings together with the work of the Venetian colourist Veronese. Delacroix, *Journal*, vol. 1, 130.

delight, the admiration with which they are seized; their respect and veneration for their legislator, with a mixture of men, women, and children, of various ages and complexions, which I imagine, will not displease those who are able to read them.” Delacroix may have known this letter quite early in his career from Maria Graham’s *Mémoires sur la vie de Nicolas Poussin* (1821), or earlier publications.³⁰¹ The moment that Poussin describes has been called by theorists of art and literature the *péripétie*, a story’s moment of reversal that offers artists and writers the greatest possibility to make their public understand its essence.³⁰²

Both seventeenth- and -nineteenth century Frenchmen would have associated Poussin’s *Gathering of the Manna* with one of the most enduring of France’s national myths, that of the French as the modern chosen people, the successors to the Israelites in this role.³⁰³ The French Revolution and the Napoleonic era reinforced the widespread conviction that the fate of France was the fate of the world; this world view inspired many nineteenth-century historical studies of the recent, dramatic past.³⁰⁴

There are similarities of composition between *The Gathering of the Manna*, *The Raft of the Medusa* (ill. 76) and *Liberty Leading the People* that can be explained

³⁰¹ Lady Maria Graham, *Mémoires sur la vie de Nicolas Poussin* (Paris: Dufart, 1821), 56. The letter was first published in André Félibien’s *Lettres de Nicolas Poussin: Précédées de la Vie de Poussin* (1688). I cite Graham’s translation of Poussin’s letter from the original English edition of her book, *Memoirs of the Life of Nicholas Poussin* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1820), 71-72. The letter was also published by Pierre-Marie Gault de Saint-Germain in his *Vie de Nicolas Poussin considéré comme chef de l’école française* (Paris: Didot, Renouard, 1806), 28.

³⁰² Jacques Thuillier, “Temps et tableau: La théorie des ‘péripéties’ dans la peinture française du XVII^e siècle,” in *Stil und Überlieferung in der Kunst des Abendlandes*, edited by Georg Kauffmann, vol. 3 (Berlin: Mann, 1967), 191-206.

³⁰³ Philippe Joutard, “Une passion française: L’histoire,” in *Les Formes de la culture*, directed by André Burguière, vol. 4 of *Histoire de la France*, directed by André Burguière and Jacques Revel (Paris: Seuil, 1993), 511-70, esp. 528-29, 533.

³⁰⁴ Joutard, “Une passion française: L’histoire,” 543.

in the light of this national myth.³⁰⁵ Like Poussin's painting, Géricault's image of the survivors of the shipwreck of the *Medusa* on their makeshift raft, victims of Bourbon arrogance and incompetence, depicts a *péripétie*, or at least the possibility of one. When the castaways are at the very point of expiring, a ship appears on the horizon. Some of them are beyond hope, while others wave frantically at the passing ship with jackets and shirts. Like Poussin, Géricault depicted the group demonstrating the greatest despair in the lower left-hand corner of his painting and people who show signs of hope on the right.



76 Théodore Géricault: *The Raft of the Medusa*. Oil on canvas. 491 x 716 cm. Salon of 1819. Paris: Musée du Louvre.

In *Liberty Leading the People*, Delacroix arranged the barricade fighters in two groups, separated by a kneeling figure. The figures on the right, the dying blind young man who recognises Liberty, Liberty herself, and the intrepid gamin de Paris, express the greatest hope, while the reason for hope itself, the tricolour waving from the tower of Notre-Dame, is, like the ship in *The Raft of the Medusa*, situated in the upper right distance. In *The Raft of the Medusa*, the

³⁰⁵ After 1840 the historian Jules Michelet and the art historian Charles Blanc, inspired by the myth of the French as modern chosen people, also noticed similarities between the composition and meaning of Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* and that of *The Gathering of the Manna*. See Marijke Jonker, "From Death and Despair to Hope: Géricault, Poussin and Cultural Memory in France," in *Orientations*, 65-76.

bulging sail indicates that the wind takes the raft to the left, in the direction of a huge wave, so that the prospect of death overshadows that of rescue. In *Liberty Leading the People*, the Goddess of Liberty with her tricolour takes the place of the frantically waving figures on the raft; instead of moving away from the viewer, like the figures in *The Raft of the Medusa*, she rushes towards him as a signal of imminent deliverance.³⁰⁶

In *The Gathering of the Manna* deliverance has arrived, while the castaways in *The Raft of the Medusa* are even now only hoping for deliverance, a difference that was likely inspired by the despair that France's liberals felt during the Restoration. In *Liberty Leading the People*, the French seem to have broken up the raft and the wooden fence that still held them imprisoned in *The Raft of the Medusa* and in Grandville's *Grande réjouissance publique* (ill. 12), to build a barricade from their wood. Delacroix has depicted the moment of deliverance of the French people from its bestial, enslaved state, the *péripétie* in France's history.

When we use Poussin's words on his *Gathering of the Manna* to describe Grandville's *Grande réjouissance publique* and *The Raft of the Medusa*, these works can be understood as depictions of the French people's "misery and famine" before this moment, while Grandville's *Chasse nationale sur les terres royales* (ill. 14) shows its "subsequent joy and delight." The figures in *Liberty Leading the People* can then be understood "by those who are able to read them" on several levels of meaning; these range from the reality of the barricade fight to the satirical, the epic, the legendary, the ghostly, the mythical, the historical, the biblical and the personal. The barricade fighters have left their dead enemies in the stony desert of the Parisian streets; a lush

³⁰⁶ Rohlmann, "Delacroix' *Liberté*: Die Erlösung der Bilder," 229-31.

forest where they can live has sprung up from the wood of the barricades when the Goddess of Liberty appeared.

Poussin and Caricature

Delacroix placed *Liberty Leading the People* in the hallowed French tradition of history painting without slavishly following it. In contrast to the figures in Poussin's *Gathering of the Manna*, those in *Liberty Leading the People* are not copied from Greek and Roman statues of Antinous, Apollo and Diana;³⁰⁷ they are realistic portrayals of barricade fighters that recall both Classical gods and heroes and the work of Grandville, one of France's most famous contemporary caricaturists.

Poussin's work was admired by Romantic landscapists; in the aftermath of the Salon of 1824, where Romanticism had triumphed, the artistic establishment of the Académie des beaux-arts reacted by exalting the painter's Classicism. In that year Quatremère de Quincy published Poussin's letters; this was an attempt to represent Poussin as a much-needed voice of reason.³⁰⁸ His approach contrasts with that of Maria Graham, whose earlier book sheds light on Poussin's sense of humour and his talent for caricature. Delacroix's satire of artists, courtiers and critics alludes to those aspects of Poussin's work that were highlighted by the British Graham and ignored by the French conservative royalist Quatremère de Quincy.

Poussin spent most of his career in Italy; his two year stay in Paris (1641-42) as a court artist was not a happy one. Graham dwells considerably longer on this unhappy episode than Quatremère de Quincy; she writes that the painter's

³⁰⁷ "...Poussin had adapted to his subject the very figures of the Laocoon, the Niobe, the Seneca, the Antinous, the Wrestlers, the Diana, the Apollo and the Venus de Medicis, and had thus peopled the desert with the grandest and the most beautiful forms." Graham, *Memoirs of the Life of Nicholas Poussin*, 73.

³⁰⁸ Nicolas Poussin, *Collection des lettres de Nicolas Poussin*, edited by Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy (Paris: Didot, 1824), VIII; the letter about *The Gathering of the Manna* is cited on p. 353. For the context of this publication project see René Schneider, *L'esthétique classique chez Quatremère de Quincy* (Paris: Hachette, 1910), 268-70.

life was spoilt by court intrigue, jealous colleagues, a heavy workload of uninteresting commissions, coldness and lack of appreciation.³⁰⁹ She gives a detailed description of Poussin's caricatures of the artists, Simon Vouet among others, with whom he had to collaborate in *The Labours of Hercules*, a series of decorative paintings commissioned for the Louvre. In 1642, just before he left France for ever, Poussin portrayed these colleagues as Folly, Ignorance and Envy (Vouet), and himself as Hercules, who slays them all.³¹⁰ During the Restoration, a frustrated Delacroix may have seen a resemblance between his own experience of royal patronage and that of France's most admired painter, who had preferred lifelong exile to the intrigues of courtiers and artists. This presumed paragon of reason had revenged himself with a series of caricatures for the miserable life that he had to lead for two years.

³⁰⁹ Graham, *Memoirs of the Life of Nicholas Poussin*, 85-101.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 99-100.

The Constitution

During the Restoration, Poussin was apparently a contested artist and so was the subject of *The Gathering of the Manna* and many other works, the life of Moses and the deliverance of the Israelites. As has been remarked, the French nation based its importance partly on its self-image as modern chosen people. For this reason, Moses played a vital part in discussions of France's ideal form of government.



77 Jean-Jacques Le Barbier: *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*. Oil on canvas. 71 x 56 cm. 1789. Paris: Musée Carnavalet.

Seventeenth-century royal propaganda had put forward Moses as a Biblical example of an absolute, just and non-despotic ruler by divine right.³¹¹ During the French Revolution, law and government were separated from the person of the king, to become the expression of the general will. The *Declaration of the Rights of Man* and all Constitutions of this period were represented in the form of the tablets of the Ten Commandments that Moses had brought with him from Mount Sinai (ill. 77). In later years, Napoleon, the instigator of the *Code Civil*, also posed as successor to Moses, the law giver.³¹² But now Moses counted no longer as the divinely inspired authority that absolutism had made of him, but as an initiate in Egypt's Isis cult, the veneration of nature that was at the origin of all religions, those of the Gauls, the Greeks, the Israelites, the Romans and the

³¹¹ Jonker, "From Death and Despair to Hope," 69.

³¹² Jonathan P. Ribner, *Broken Tablets: The Cult of the Law in French Art from David to Delacroix* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 8, 41.

Christians, and of the universally valid Ten Commandments.³¹³ Moses played a key role in both Catholic state religion and the universal religion that freemasonry believed itself to be, in absolutism and constitutionalism.

When the Bourbons returned to France in 1814, the Constitution became the Constitutional Charter; this was no longer the expression of the general will but the gift of the king, once again the supreme legislator, to the French people.³¹⁴ Now liberals such as Stendhal and Joseph Salvador claimed Moses for the cause of liberty and equality.³¹⁵ On the royalist side we find Victor Hugo; in one of his last royalist poems written before his “conversion” to liberalism he alluded to Moses to underline the closeness of royal authority to that of God. In *Le sacre de Charles X* (1825), his ode on the coronation of Charles X, he writes that, just like Moses on Mount Sinai, the king had seen God from eye to eye.³¹⁶



78 Coat-of-arms of France, 1831-1848.

After the July Revolution, in 1831, the crown in the centre of the royal coat of arms was replaced by the Constitutional Charter, again in the form of two law tablets (ill. 78), to underline that the ordering of the French state was no longer dependent on royal authority but based on its Constitution and laws.³¹⁷ *Liberty Leading the People* contains an allegory on the Constitution that

³¹³ Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 117.

³¹⁴ Ribner, *Broken Tablets*, 52.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

³¹⁷ In practice this meant that the law became a shield to protect the throne, order and property. *Ibid.*, 71.

alludes to the official imagery of the law tablets, but also to recent events that were only known to Delacroix's most intimate friends.

In *La Tricolore*, the poem in which the July Revolution figures as the revenge for Waterloo, Barthélemy and Méry connected the self-sacrifice of the Spartans at Thermopylae, the Constitutional Charter and the law tablets with the paving stones that had been used to build the barricades: “Your triumph, new Sparta, will remain engraved on your soil, Every letter of our Charter is written on a paving stone, If, to disturb this great feast, Europe would throw a king at us, May the people crush his head with the tablets of the law.”³¹⁸



79 Liberty Leading the People, detail.

³¹⁸ “Ton triomphe, nouvelle Sparte,
Sur ton sol restera gravé;
Chaque lettre de notre Charte
Est écrite sur un pavé,
Si, troublant cette grande fête,
L’Europe nous jetait un roi,
Avec les tables de la loi
Que le peuple écrase sa tête.” Barthélemy et Méry, “La Tricolore,” 26.

In *Liberty Leading the People* many of the paving stones of the barricade have been marked by pavers. Only two stones are marked with clearly discernible letters; the one that the voltigeur grasps is marked with a C, the one below it with a V (ill. 79). These stones, ready for throwing, may stand for *Vive le Charte* or *Vive la Constitution*; like the offending *pékin*, these words are likely shouted by the barricade fighters. The V and C may refer to many other things beside the Constitution, as is demonstrated by a letter of 1 May 1830 by Delacroix to his nephew Charles de Verninac, whose initials they are. In this letter, the painter links animal rut, the rut that figures as driving force of the Revolution in Barbier's *La Curée*, with his own Roland-like unrequited sexual desire for his later mistress Joséphine de Forget. The letter contains a vivid description of a stallion who mounts a mare, an event that Delacroix had witnessed "by special favour." In this highly sexually charged context Delacroix writes: "La V... dans le C..." meaning "La Verge dans le Con" (Cock in Cunt).³¹⁹

Even Delacroix's own sexuality seems to play its role in *Liberty Leading the People*; it contrasts with the prudishness and impotence of the Bourbons and their entourage. A stallion can transform into a Goddess of Liberty, as if male and female become one being, and obscene graffiti are transformed into "Long live the Constitution." In this way Delacroix seems to invite us to interpret not only the July Revolution, but also his creation of *Liberty Leading the People*, as liberating, violent sexual acts in which he and the French people have regained their virility.

³¹⁹ Delacroix, *Further Correspondence*, 14.

Psalm 91 and Waterloo

In this chapter I will begin my discussion of Delacroix's interest in Psalm 91, the source of the monstrous serpent, lion, and dragon who, in *Liberty Leading the People*, lie dead under the scorching July sun. Psalm 91 (90 in the Septuagint numbering that was used in the French Catholic church during Delacroix's lifetime) evokes the transformation, brought about by faith in God, of weakness and fear of demons into strength. It contains the words "...on asp and cobra you will tread, and you will trample lion and dragon underfoot."³²⁰ An earlier line of Psalm 91 compares those who put their trust in God with hunted animals who are saved: "...because it is he who will rescue me from a trap of hunters..." In the psalm, vulnerable human beings, in danger of being killed by hunters as if they were animals, seem to transform into fearless monster slayers. This transformation foreshadows the one that Delacroix has depicted in *Liberty Leading the People*.

The French ancien régime kings regarded themselves as political and military defenders of the Christian faith. They adopted Psalm 91, which could be interpreted as an image of Christ trampling beasts who represented the forces of evil, for propagandistic use.³²¹ The Virgin Mary also was often represented trampling a serpent, and several of the prayers spoken during the Sacre of the French kings referred to Psalm 91.³²²

The immediate inspiration for Delacroix's Goddess of Liberty was Barbier's evocation of the French Revolution's allegorical image of Liberty as a living,

³²⁰ Translation by Albert Pietersma, in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, edited by Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, 2nd pr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 593.

³²¹ Brennan Breed, "The Reception of the Psalms: The Example of Psalm 91," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, edited by William P. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 297-312, esp. 305-06.

³²² M.A. de M. [Pons-Augustin Alletz], *Cérémonial du sacre et du couronnement des rois et reines de France*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Denn, 1825), 82, 101, 108, 120.

powerful woman. The Classical costume, Phrygian cap and tricolour of his Goddess of Liberty are attributes that Delacroix borrowed from these allegories. He may have known prints in which Liberty, just like Christ and the Virgin Mary, is trampling monsters or other symbols of evil. In my view these prints refer partly to the religious allegory of Psalm 91, which is now used to portray the Bourbons as evil, monstrous enemies of political liberty.



80 Garneray del., Queverdo sculps.: Ernouf général de division chef de l'État major, liberté égalité fraternité. Etching. 9 x 15 cm. 1793-95. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The allegory of Liberty in a print by Jean-François Garneray from the years 1793-1795 (ill. 80) may serve as an example. Garneray's personification of Liberty strides forward, brandishing Hercules's club, a symbol of the Strength needed to vanquish the Republic's enemies,³²³ in one hand, and a bundle of lightning shafts in the other. She tramples the symbols of royalty and religious fanaticism underfoot and strikes a leopard and a two-headed eagle, symbols of

³²³ Annie Jourdan, "Libertés du XVIIIe siècle: Concepts et images," in *Visualisation*, edited by Roland Mortier (Berlin: Berlin Verlag/Spitz, 1999), 39-58, esp. 48.

the enemies of the Revolution,³²⁴ with lightning. She is dressed in Classical draperies and wears a Phrygian cap; her breasts are bare; behind her we see a flag draped over a cannon.

Delacroix may also have been familiar with Napoleonic propaganda that made use of religious allegory. One example of the propagandistic use of Psalm 91 in connexion with Napoleon's battles is the sermon (available in print to the general public) in Notre-Dame on Napoleon's fortieth birthday, on 15 August 1809; his victory in the campaign of 1809 against Austria was also celebrated. One of the great battles of this campaign was that at Raab, and the Delacroix family may have remembered this 15 August as the day on which Charles-Henry Delacroix's valour in this and other battles had been rewarded by the announcement of his elevation to the nobility. The birthday sermon quotes Psalm 91 when it represents Napoleon as a man who is protected by God against his enemies, and who sees "a thousand fall beside him and ten thousand at his right side" without danger coming near him.³²⁵

After Napoleon's downfall, Psalm 91 became inextricably linked with the victors of the battles at Leipzig and Waterloo, who had restored the Bourbon Monarchy. In 1828 the Swiss evangelist Henry Louis Empeytaz published a pious biography of tsar Alexander I, instigator of the Holy Alliance. The tsar had been one of the army leaders in the Battle of Leipzig of October 1813, where a coalition of Russia, Prussia, Austria and Sweden had defeated Napoleon. Alexander's occupation of Paris in March 1814 had been followed

³²⁴ Jourdan, "Libertés du XVIIIe siècle," 48.

³²⁵ [Jacques] Raillon, *Discours pour la solennité du 15 août 1809, prononcé dans l'église métropolitaine de Paris* (Paris: Le Normant, 1809), 23.

by Napoleon's abdication on 11 April.³²⁶ Empeytaz revealed that in his younger days the tsar had been a Christian only in name. His conversion to Christianity had begun in 1813, at the beginning of the campaign that would lead to the Battle of Leipzig. At that time Alexander was going through an internal struggle; when he left his country, a lady of his court who was aware of his torment gave him a copy of Psalm 91 and advised him to read it often. A couple of days later, when he had reached the border of Russia, he attended a church service where the words of Psalm 91 "...on asp and cobra you will tread, and you will trample lion and dragon underfoot" were used in the sermon. He regarded this double introduction to Psalm 91 as a direction of Providence.³²⁷ Empeytaz left his readers to conclude that the task imposed on the tsar was that of crushing Napoleon and his generals, who were the serpents, lions and dragons of the psalm.

The psalm held a special significance for the victors of Waterloo, which was based on its connexion with the day on which the battle took place. In 1815 the British major Harry Smith, a pious Anglican who had fought at Waterloo, wrote in a letter: "The battle was fought on a Sunday, the 18th June, and I repeated to myself a verse from the Psalms of that day, 91st Psalm, 7th verse: A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee."³²⁸ In Catholic liturgy, Psalm 91 is also recited on Sundays and church holidays in the last office of the day, Compline, which

³²⁶H[enry] L[ouis] E[mpeytaz], *Notice sur Alexandre, Empereur de Russie* (Geneva: Guers, 1828). Empeytaz's book sheds light on the emperor's conversion from lover of worldly pleasures to adherent of the Christian mysticism preached by Madame Julie de Krüdener and Empeytaz. During the summer of 1815, when Alexander resided in Paris, Madame de Krüdener convinced him that he was the Elect of the Lord, destined to found the Kingdom of God on earth. She regarded the Holy Alliance as "The Declaration of the Rights of God."

³²⁷ Empeytaz, *Notice sur Alexandre*, 9-10.

³²⁸ Cited in Bernard Cornwell, *Waterloo: The History of Four Days, Three Armies and Three Battles* (London: Collins, 2014), 322.

begins at nightfall.³²⁹ In the absence of another decisive moment, the chance meeting at nightfall of the British and Prussian commanders Wellington and Blücher, who congratulated each other on their victory, was regarded as the end of the Battle of Waterloo.³³⁰ Just like the tsar, the victors of Waterloo could be said to have been instruments of Providence. They crushed the serpents, lions and dragons of Psalm 91, the psalm that was recited in Anglican and Catholic liturgy on Sundays, and that was connected with the time of their meeting. Psalm 91 was recited during the services of thanksgiving that were celebrated in the aftermath of the battle, but also, by order of King William I of the Netherlands, after the *Te Deum* that until 1830 was sung yearly in the Belgian cathedrals on the anniversary of the victory.³³¹

In *Liberty Leading the People* Delacroix expresses a preoccupation with the date and day of the week on which historical events took place, and these events' secular and religious meaning, in a way that resembles the religious interpretation that the Bourbons and the Holy Alliance gave to Napoleon's two defeats. Its exact title, *The 28th July: Liberty Leading the People*, ties the painting to a day on which revolutionary violence was not driven by aggression or radicalism but by despair. It also connects Wednesday 28 July 1830 with Wednesday 14 July 1790, the day of the Fête de la Fédération, that great religious and secular national celebration of loyalty to king, country and Constitution, led by La Fayette; the general had also played a unifying and pacifying role during the July Revolution and the early days of the July

³²⁹ *Paroissien contenant l'office complet des dimanches, des fêtes et de tous les jours de l'année à l'usage de Paris et de Rome* (Paris: Lefuel, [ca. 1817]), 95.

³³⁰ See f.i. Christopher Kelly, *A Full and Circumstantial Account of the Memorable Battle of Waterloo...* (London: Kelly, 1817), 54.

³³¹ L.G.V., *Mandements, lettres pastorales, circulaires et autres documents, publiés dans le diocèse de Liège depuis le Concordat de 1801 jusqu'à 1830*, vol. 2, 1814-1830 (Liège: Dessain, 1851), 34, 125, 144, 161.

Monarchy. The title invites us to look forward to the peaceful outcome of the July Revolution instead of dwelling on its violence.

The barricade fighters are depicted as lonely, frightened people who have just left their former animal state to fight for their livelihood, when the epiphany of Liberty among them announces that these poor people are about to liberate France and kill the monsters who have enslaved them for so long. This transformation of the desperate struggle of 28 July into a religious, epiphanic moment enables us to equal it to 15 August, the Assumption of the Virgin, the day on which the Bourbons celebrated the mysterious alliance between themselves, France, and the Virgin Mary.

The deity who guides the French people in *Liberty Leading the People* is no longer the Christian god or the Virgin Mary. Neither can she be fully identified with the secular personifications of Liberty which, during the French Revolution, superseded the Virgin Mary, especially when the altar of the Vow of Louis XIII in Notre-Dame was replaced with an altar of Liberty. Instead, Delacroix created a primeval personification of nature and natural liberty, a goddess whose cult was universal in a past where religious tolerance and syncretism were the rule; she had retaken her rightful place in Paris during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, to be dethroned again during the Bourbon Restoration.

Napoleonic propaganda had used religious allegories and festivities for its own purposes; it had also ensured that every French citizen knew certain days and dates from the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era by heart. Lists of battles were recited with almost religious fervour by schoolboys and adults alike. Several of these great days must have held a deep personal significance for Delacroix. One magical list was that of the battles at Marengo (where

Charles-Henry Delacroix had fought), Friedland (where Henri Delacroix had been killed), and Raab (where Charles-Henry had charged at the head of his regiment). These battles had all been fought on 14 June. Both the Battle of Eylau, in which Charles-Henry had voluntarily charged at the head of the chasseurs, and the Battle of Friedland had been fought on Sundays. France's defeat at Waterloo on a Sunday, a battle that was never commemorated in France itself, had overshadowed these two glorious Sundays for fifteen years. Delacroix freed Psalm 91 from the Bourbons and the victors of Leipzig and Waterloo; he placed the barricade fighters of the July Revolution, the men who had revenged Waterloo, under its protection, and with them his two brothers who had sacrificed themselves for France.

Psalm 91 and *The Martyrdom of Saint Symphorian*

Delacroix was not a political radical. He hated the Bourbons but welcomed the new monarch; he abhorred Catholic state religion but was greatly interested in religious history and Christianity's place in it. Although he acknowledged the despair of the barricade fighters and their heroic fight for liberty, he showed no sympathy for the radical republicanism that some of them had embraced during the July Days. His interpretation of the July Revolution in *Liberty Leading the People* is an intellectual and highly symbolic one; the painting depicts the heroic liberation of the French people from its state of people bestial, and the return of Gallic religious and political liberty. Far more than the grievances of the barricade fighters, Delacroix's own despair during the Bourbon Restoration, humiliation, lack of recognition, and the sad fate of people whom he loved inspired the creation of *Liberty Leading the People*. With this painting he also settled old scores; it was a demonstration of his artistic and intellectual superiority.

The references to Psalm 91 in *Liberty Leading the People* enabled Delacroix to ridicule Ingres even more than he had already done on account of *The Vow of Louis XIII*. At the time of the July Revolution, the laurelled Academician had not yet completed his *Martyrdom of Saint Symphorian*. This painting was to depict the martyrdom of a saint who could count as the embodiment of mediocrity; his most important aim in life had been the annihilation of the syncretic heathen religion and art of ancient Gaul. Delacroix likely intended *Liberty Leading the People* to be the painting that would make the completion of *The Martyrdom of Saint Symphorian* unnecessary.

After the success of *The Vow of Louis XIII* at the Salon of 1824, Ingres had received a commission for a second religious painting from the minister of the

interior, this time by request of the bishop of Autun. Its subject was to be the martyrdom of a local Christian martyr from the second century AD, who was believed to have been one of the first Christian martyrs of pagan Gaul. Saint Symphorian was a young man belonging to a small Christian minority in Augustodunum (Autun), who was sentenced to death for mocking the statue of the mother goddess Berecynthia or Cybele. Ingres had to follow strict instructions from the bishop, who commissioned a depiction of the moment in which Symphorian turns to his mother to bid her a last farewell. She is standing on the city ramparts to encourage him to die bravely, in the expectancy of God's reward in the hereafter (ill. 81).³³²



81 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres: *The Martyrdom of Saint Symphorian*. Oil on canvas. 407 x 339 cm. Salon of 1834. Autun: Cathédrale Saint-Lazare.

The painting had already been expected at the *Salon* of 1827, where Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* had foundered, but there Ingres exhibited only its *modello*. It was first exhibited four years after the July Revolution, when religion had become a contested subject and pro- or anti-Bourbon stances coloured its reviews.³³³ In 1830, Ingres's long expected painting, commissioned to serve the needs of the defunct government and the Catholic State Church, had simply still not been finished, while Delacroix was working on a painting that celebrated political, artistic and religious liberty.

³³² Andrew Carrington Shelton, *Ingres and his Critics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 20.

³³³ Shelton, *Ingres and his Critics*, 18-26.

The bishop of Autun's knowledge of Symphorian's life was probably based on Thierry Ruinart's seventeenth-century collection of martyrs' lives, *Les véritables actes des martyrs*, which went through several reprints during the Restoration, most likely as part of the Catholic offensive against Voltaire, Charles Dupuis and other dangerous writers.³³⁴ Ruinart, who, like Jacques Martin, belonged to the Maurist order, describes the saint as a well-bred Christian young man from the highest circles of Augustodunum society, who at the age of twenty had attained the praiseworthy mediocrity that was the soul of every virtue. His ire was only raised by the idolatry that he saw around him; when after his arrest he was questioned about his beliefs, he asserted that the statue of Cybele was nothing but a temptation from the devil and asked for a hammer to smash it. His dislike of Apollo and Diana, the two other gods who were revered in Augustodunum, was even greater. He pointed to Apollo's effeminate appearance and infamous love life, and accused Diana of being none other than the noonday demon of Psalm 91 ("You will not be afraid ... of mishap and noonday demon"), who roamed city squares and crossroads to sow discord and envy in the hearts of mortals.³³⁵

In his *Religion des Gaulois*, Jacques Martin explained that the noonday demon could not only be identified with Diana, but also with a Greek demon, the Empusa, whose appearance -just like that of Diana- changed constantly; sometimes she was an animal and sometimes a beautiful woman. She had only

³³⁴ I have used the 1818 edition; the book was also republished by the Parisian *Société catholique des bons livres* in 1825. See for the history of this society Lyons, *Reading Culture and Writing Practices in Nineteenth-Century France*, 78. Dom Thierry Ruinart, *Les véritables actes des martyrs: Recueillis sur plusieurs anciens manuscrits, sous le titre de Acta primorum martyrium, sincera et selecta: traduits en Français par [Jean-Baptiste] Drouet de Maupertuy*, vol. 1 (Lyon: Rivoire, 1818), 111-21. (Original Latin edition 1689, original French edition 1708).

³³⁵ Ruinart, *Les véritables actes des martyrs*, vol. 1, 119.

one leg, so that she seemed to hurl herself forward (*se ruer*) instead of walking, and she appeared mainly at midday when the dead were buried.³³⁶

In *Liberty Leading the People*, the gods and demons of the pre-Christian world, which Symphorian and later the Frankish kings wanted to destroy, have returned. The goddess Isis or Diana has taken the place of the Virgin Mary; she may also be the noonday demon, able to change shape as if she is a flame. She is, then, disabled and must throw herself forward on the one leg and foot that Delacroix depicted, to lead the French to liberty. In Auguste Barbier's words: through the firing and under the detested sabre, the barricade fighters, the holy canaille, "se ruaient à l'immortalité," hurled themselves forward into immortality. The dragon, serpent and lion whom they have defeated are not the enemies of the Bourbons, but the Bourbons and their allies themselves. These monsters now lie dead in the desert of the Parisian streets, on the paving stones that form the words of the Constitutional Charter.

By her nature the noonday demon, as Artemis/Diana/Arduina the embodiment of the liberty of ancient Gaul, is destined to appear suddenly in the city of Paris, together with the Black Hunter, at midday on this sunny Wednesday 28 July, when the Bourbons are buried for ever. Instead of being killed by the barricade fighters like the other monsters of Psalm 91, the noonday demon, who is traditionally associated with melancholy or *spleen*, its fashionable nineteenth-century form, thrives on the French people's tears, pain, hatred, boredom, melancholy and hopelessness.³³⁷

³³⁶ Martin, *La Religion des Gaulois*, vol. 2, book 4, 64.

³³⁷ In early Christianity the noonday demon was associated with *acedia*, the melancholy, laziness and boredom which beset young monks in the first desert monasteries especially during the hottest hours of the day. During more modern times, the noonday demon became associated with dejection and *ennui* in general. See Clifford Kuhn, *The Demon of Noontide: Ennui in Western Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976).



82 Delacroix: *Un bonhomme de lettres en méditation*. Lithograph (second state), 21 x 18 cm. 1821. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The mediocrity and indolence of royalist intellectuals, that put its mark on society as a whole, had been caricatured by Delacroix in 1821, in a print with the title *A Literary Fellow Meditating* (*Un bonhomme de lettres en méditation*, ill. 82),³³⁸ which contains many themes that return in *Liberty Leading the People*. We see an old ultra-royalist Academician, who wears a dressing gown over his eighteenth-century costume and uses a candle extinguisher as a nightcap. He sits in a room filled with symbols of Bourbon, noble, and Catholic tyranny and arrogance. His family tree, laden with coats of arms, is prominently on display; his elegant nobleman's and Academician's sword is within reach, as is his wig, with a queue that resembles a pig tail. On his table lies a pile of books by good Catholic authors, his own notes, and a Sacred Heart that functions as a

³³⁸ Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Eugène Delacroix*, 75-77.

paperweight; in accordance with Psalm 110 he uses the books of the eighteenth-century *philosophes*, his enemies, as a footstool. A pleasant picture of an *auto-da-fé* brings the missionaries' book burnings to mind; a portrait of the Duke of Marlborough, a British general who had humiliatingly defeated the French, symbolises the real power behind the Bourbons. Doubtlessly this old man is a *voltigeur de Louis XIV*, who has returned to power thanks to his good connexions, noble lineage, and loyalty to the Bourbons. His words "In what century are we!!!", that form the subtitle of the print, betray him as a man whose sympathies lie with the *ancien régime*.

With the Bourbons, their favouritism, tyranny, mediocrity, piety, hatred of art and pious vandalism are also laid to rest. With the July Revolution, the religious festivals of the Bourbons have lost their function, and Waterloo Sunday has been revenged; the great battles of the Revolution and the Empire, their heroes and their dead, admired and mourned by many families, will be honoured again by France. 15 August can again be remembered as Napoleon's birthday and a beloved brother's moment of glory; the Fête de la Fédération will be commemorated again. Monsieur Ingres's work in progress is not needed anymore, neither is any other modern painting that glorifies the Bourbons. No more dejection and lack of purpose for Eugène, no more need to drive away boredom and want of passion with "special favours" to see horses mate. In his letter to Charles-Henry of 13 October that I have cited earlier, Delacroix writes "the spleen is going away, thanks to work," meaning the work on *Liberty Leading the People*.³³⁹ A fiercely independent Monsieur Delacroix offers his

³³⁹ "Pour le spleen il s'en va, grâce au travail." Delacroix, *Lettres intimes*, 191.

talent to the new king and the nation, with a painting that celebrates liberty and originality, revolution and change.

Auguste Barbier: La Curée

I

Oh ! lorsqu'un lourd soleil chauffait les grandes dalles
Des ponts et de nos quais déserts,
Que les cloches hurlaient, que la grêle des balles
Sifflait et pleuvait par les airs ;
Que dans Paris entier, comme la mer qui monte,
Le peuple soulevé grondait,
Et qu'au lugubre accent des vieux canons de fonte
La Marseillaise répondait,
Certes, on ne voyait pas, comme au jour où nous sommes,
Tant d'uniformes à la fois ;
C'était sous des haillons que battaient les coeurs d'homme
C'étaient alors de sales doigts
Qui chargeaient les mousquets et renvoyaient la foudre ;
C'était la bouche aux vils jurons
Qui mâchait la cartouche, et qui, noire de poudre,
Criait aux citoyens : Mourons !

II

Quant à tous ces beaux fils aux tricolores flammes,
Au beau linge, au frac élégant,
Ces hommes en corset, ces visages de femmes,
Héros du boulevard de Gand,
Que faisaient-ils, tandis qu'à travers la mitraille,
Et sous le sabre détesté,
La grande populace et la sainte canaille
Se ruaient à l'immortalité ?
Tandis que tout Paris se jonchait de merveilles,
Ces messieurs tremblaient dans leur peau,
Pâles, suant la peur, et la main aux oreilles,
Accroupis derrière un rideau.

III

C'est que la Liberté n'est pas une comtesse
Du noble faubourg Saint-Germain,
Une femme qu'un cri fait tomber en faiblesse,

Qui met du blanc et du carmin
C'est une forte femme aux puissantes mamelles,
À la voix rauque, aux durs appas,
Qui, du brun sur la peau, du feu dans les prunelles,
Agile et marchant à grands pas,
Se plaît aux cris du peuple, aux sanglantes mêlées,
Aux longs roulements des tambours,
À l'odeur de la poudre, aux lointaines volées
Des cloches et des canons sourds ;
Qui ne prend ses amours que dans la populace,
Qui ne prête son large flanc
Qu'à des gens forts comme elle, et qui veut qu'on l'embrasse
Avec des bras rouges de sang.

IV

C'est la vierge fougueuse, enfant de la Bastille,
Qui jadis, lorsqu'elle apparut
Avec son air hardi, ses allures de fille,
Cinq ans mit tout le peuple en rut ;
Qui, plus tard, entonnant une marche guerrière,
Lasse de ses premiers amants,
Jeta là son bonnet, et devint vivandière
D'un capitaine de vingt ans
C'est cette femme, enfin, qui, toujours belle et nue,
Avec l'écharpe aux trois couleurs,
Dans nos murs mitraillés tout à coup reparue,
Vient de sécher nos yeux en pleurs,
De remettre en trois jours une haute couronne
Aux mains des Français soulevés,
D'écraser une armée et de broyer un trône
Avec quelques tas de pavés.

V

Mais, ô honte ! Paris, si beau dans sa colère,
Paris, si plein de majesté
Dans ce jour de tempête où le vent populaire
Déracina la royauté,
Paris, si magnifique avec ses funérailles,
Ses débris d'hommes, ses tombeaux,

Ses chemins dépavés et ses pans de murailles
Troués comme de vieux drapeaux ;
Paris, cette cité de lauriers toute ceinte,
Dont le monde entier est jaloux,
Que les peuples émus appellent tous la sainte,
Et qu'ils ne nomment qu'à genoux,
Paris n'est maintenant qu'une sentine impure,
Un égout sordide et boueux,
Où mille noirs courants de limon et d'ordure
Viennent traîner dans leurs flots honteux ;
Un taudis regorgeant de faquins sans courage,
D'effrontés coureurs de salons,
Qui vont de porte en porte, et d'étage en étage,
Gueusant quelque bout de galons ;
Une halle cynique aux clameurs insolentes,
Où chacun cherche à déchirer
Un misérable coin de guenilles sanglantes
Du pouvoir qui vient d'expirer.

VI

Ainsi, quand désertant sa bauge solitaire,
Le sanglier, frappé de mort,
Est là, tout palpitant, étendu sur la terre,
Et sous le soleil qui le mord ;
Lorsque, blanchi de bave et la langue tirée,
Ne bougeant plus en ses liens,
Il meurt, et que la trompe a sonné la curée
A toute la meute des chiens,
Toute la meute, alors, comme une vague immense,
Bondit ; alors chaque matin
Hurle en signe de joie, et prépare d'avance
Ses larges crocs pour le festin ;
Et puis vient la cohue, et les abois féroces
Roulent de vallons en vallons ;
Chiens courants et limiers, et dogues, et molosses,
Tout s'élançe, et tout crie : Allons !
Quand le sanglier tombe et roule sur l'arène,
Allons, allons ! les chiens sont rois !
Le cadavre est à nous ; payons-nous notre peine,
Nos coups de dents et nos abois.

Allons! nous n'avons plus de valet qui nous fouaille
Et qui se pend à notre cou :
Du sang chaud, de la chair, allons, faisons ripaille,
Et gorgeons-nous tout notre soûl !
Et tous, comme ouvriers que l'on met à la tâche,
Fouillent ses flancs à plein museau,
Et de l'ongle et des dents travaillent sans relâche,
Car chacun en veut un morceau ;
Car il faut au chenil que chacun d'eux revienne
Avec un os demi-rongé,
Et que, trouvant au seuil son orgueilleuse chienne,
Jalouse et le poil allongé,
Il lui montre sa gueule encore rouge, et qui grogne,
Son os dans les dents arrêté,
Et lui crie, en jetant son quartier de charogne :
" Voici ma part de royauté "

Août 1830.

Psalm 91 (90)

A laudation. Of an Ode Pertaining to David.

translation Albert Pietersma.

He who lives by the help of the Most High,
in a shelter of the God of the sky he will
lodge.

He will say to the Lord, “My supporter you
are and my refuge;

my God, I will hope in him,”

because it is he who will rescue me from a
trap of hunters

and from a troublesome word;

with the broad of his back he will shade you,

and under his wings you will find hope;

with a shield his truth will surround you.

You will not be afraid of nocturnal fright,

of an arrow that flies by day,

of a deed that travels in darkness,

of mishap and noonday demon.

At your side a thousand will fall,

and ten thousand at your right,

but it will not come near you.

Only with your eyes will you perceive,

and the requital of sinners you will see.

Because you, O Lord, are my hope,
the Most High you made your refuge.

No evil shall come before you,
and no scourge shall come near your
covert,

because he will command his angels
concerning you

to guard you in all your ways;
upon hands they will bear you up
so that you will not dash your foot
against a stone.

On asp and cobra you will tread,
and you will trample lion and dragon
under foot.

Because in me he hoped, I will also rescue
him;

I will protect him, because he knew my
name.

He will call to me, and I will listen to him;

I am with him in trouble;

I will deliver and glorify him.

With length of days I will satisfy him
and show him my deliverance.